



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

Box 2

Box 2

Box 2

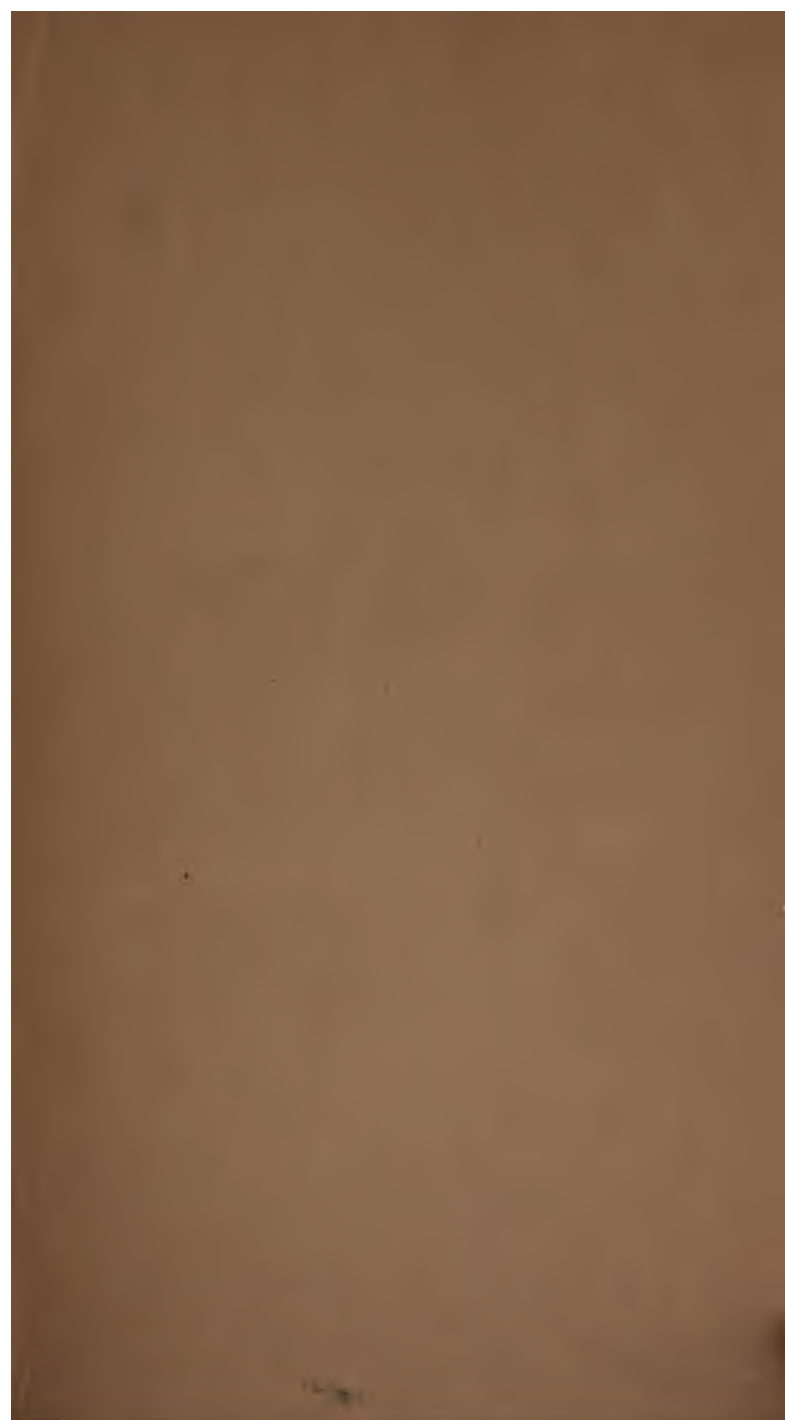
Box 2

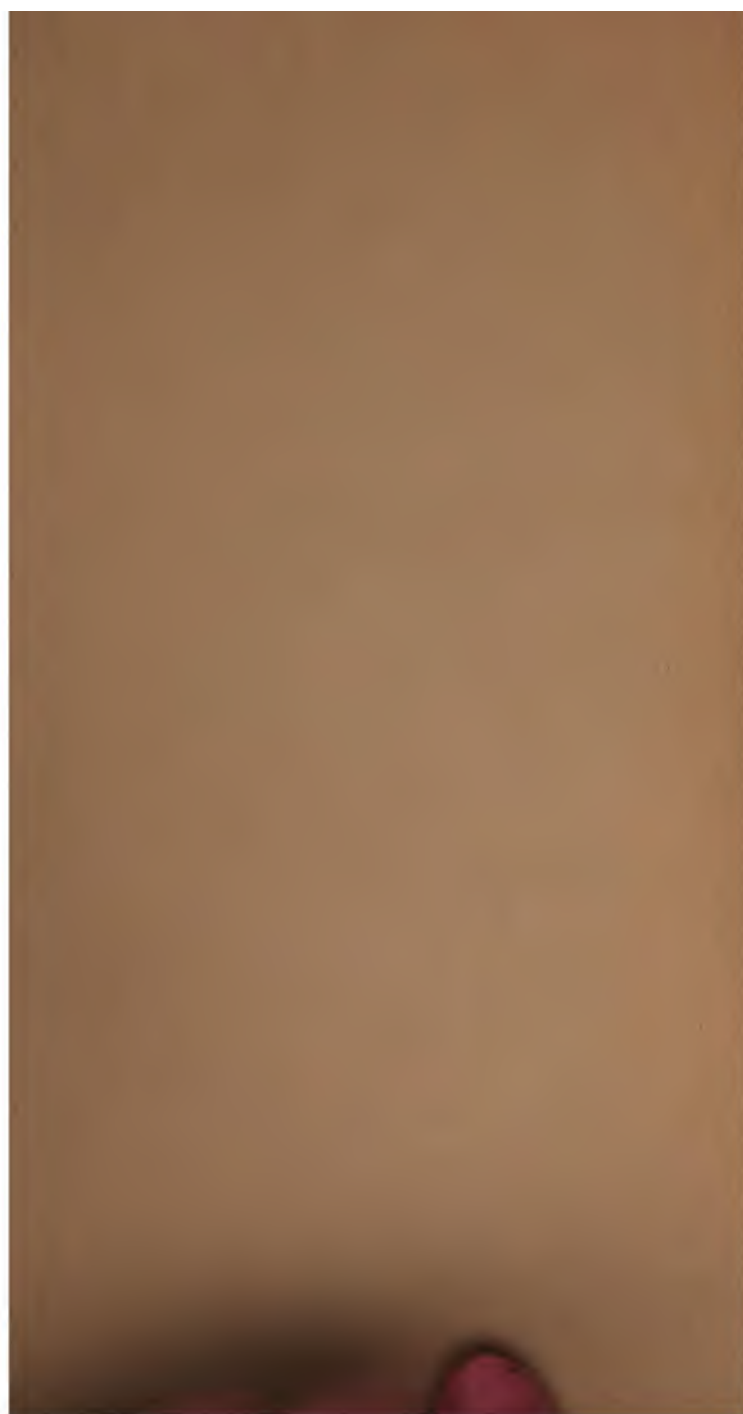
Box 2

Box 2



Given
The Gift of
Dez in Augustus Wright
of the
Senior class
5 June, 18





HARPER'S FAMILY LIBRARY.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>Nos. 1, 2, 3. Milman's History of the Jews. With plates 3 v.</p> <p>4, 5. Lockhart's Life of Napoleon Bonaparte. Plates.. 2 v.</p> <p>6. Southey's Life of Nelson 1 v.</p> <p>7. Williams's Life of Alexander the Great. Plates.... 1 v.</p> <p>8. Natural History of Insects 1 v.</p> <p>9. Galt's Life of Lord Byron 1 v.</p> <p>10. Bush's Life of Mohammed 1 v.</p> <p>11. Scott on Demonology and Witchcraft. Plate..... 1 v.</p> <p>12, 13. Gleig's Bible History.. 2 v.</p> <p>14. Discovery and Adventure in the Polar Seas, &c..... 1 v.</p> <p>15. Croly's Life of George IV. 1 v.</p> <p>16. Discovery and Adventure in Africa. Engravings.. 1 v.</p> <p>17, 18, 19. Cunningham's Lives of Painters, Sculptors, &c. 3 v.</p> <p>20. James's History of Chivalry and the Crusades.... 1 v.</p> <p>21, 22. Bell's Life of Mary Queen of Scots. Portrait 2 v.</p> <p>23. Russell's Ancient and Modern Egypt. With plates.. 1 v.</p> <p>24. Fletcher's History Poland 1 v.</p> <p>25. Smith's Festivals, Games, and Amusements..... 1 v.</p> <p>26. Brewster's Life of Sir Isaac Newton. With plates... 1 v.</p> <p>27. Russell's Palestine, or the Holy Land. With Plates 1 v.</p> <p>28. Memes's Memoirs of Empress Josephine. Plates.. 1 v.</p> | <p>No. 29. The Court and Camp of Bonaparte. With plates 1 v.</p> <p>30. Lives of Early Navigators 1 v.</p> <p>31. Description of Pitcairn's Island, Mutiny of the Bounty, &c. Engravings..... 1 v.</p> <p>32. Turner's Sacred History of the World..... 1 v.</p> <p>33, 34. Memoirs of celebrated Female Sovereigns..... 2 v.</p> <p>35, 36. Landers' Africa..... 2 v.</p> <p>37. Abercrombie on the Intellectual Powers, &c..... 1 v.</p> <p>38, 39, 40. Lives of Celebrated Travellers..... 3 v.</p> <p>41, 42. Life of Frederic II. King of Prussia. Portrait.... 2 v.</p> <p>43, 44. Sketches from Venetian History. With plates... 2 v.</p> <p>45, 46. Thatcher's Indian Lives 2 v.</p> <p>47, 48, 49. History of India.... 3 v.</p> <p>50. Brewster's Letters on Natural Magic. Engravings. 1 v.</p> <p>51, 52. History of Ireland.... 2 v.</p> <p>Several historical works in press.</p> |
|--|---|

CLASSICAL SERIES.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1, 2. Xenophon. (Anabasis and Cyropædia.) Portrait.... 2 v.</p> <p>3, 4. Leland's Demosthenes.. 2 v.</p> <p>5. Rose's Sallust. Portrait.. 1 v.</p> | |
|---|--|

DRAMATIC SERIES.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1, 2, 3. Massinger's Plays.... 3 v.</p> <p>4, 5. Ford's Plays..... 2 v.</p> | |
|--|--|

Theological Library.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Life of Wiclif. By Rev. C. W. Le Bas. Portrait.... 1 v.</p> | <p>2. Consistency of Revelation. By Rev. Dr. Shuttleworth 1 v.</p> |
|---|--|

Boy's and Girl's Library.

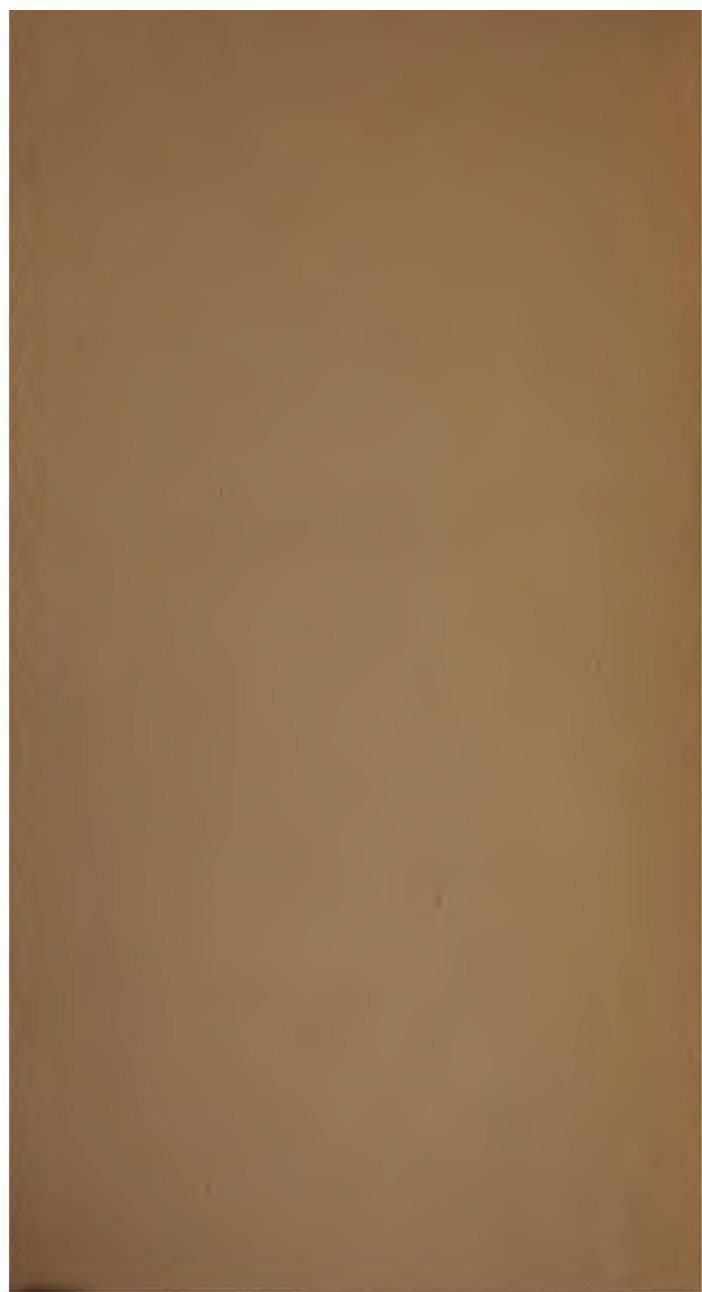
- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Lives of the Apostles, &c. 1 v.</p> | <p>2, 3. Swiss Family Robinson.. 2 v.</p> |
|---|---|

Standard Histories.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>Gibbon's Rome. Maps..... 4 v.</p> <p>Robertson's Works. Plates.. 3 v.</p> | <p>History of Modern Europe. By Russell and Jones..... 3 v.</p> |
|--|---|

Library of Select Novels.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1, 2. Cyril Thornton..... 2 v.</p> <p>3, 4. Dutchman's Fireside.. 2 v.</p> <p>5, 6. The Young Duke 2 v.</p> <p>7, 8. Anastasius..... 2 v.</p> <p>9, 10. Philip Augustus..... 2 v.</p> <p>11, 12. Caleb Williams..... 2 v.</p> <p>13, 14. The Club-Book..... 2 v.</p> <p>15, 16. De Vere..... 2 v.</p> | <p>17, 18. The Smuggler..... 2 v.</p> <p>19, 20. Eugene Aram..... 2 v.</p> <p>21, 22. Evelina..... 2 v.</p> <p>23, 24. The Spy..... 2 v.</p> <p>25, 26. Westward Ho! By J. K. Paulding..... 2 v.</p> <p>27, 28. Glauber Spa..... 2 v.</p> <p>29, 30. Henry Masterton.... 2 v.</p> |
|---|---|



HARPER'S FAMILY LIBRARY.

- | | |
|--|--|
| Nos. 1, 2, 3. <i>Milton's History of the Jews.</i> With plates. 1 v. | Nr. 21. <i>The Tower and Camp of Bannagore.</i> With plates. 1 v. |
| 4, 5. <i>Lockhart's Life of Napoleon Bonaparte.</i> Plates. 1 v. | 22. <i>Lives of Early Navigators.</i> 1 v. |
| 6. <i>Southey's Life of Nelson.</i> 1 v. | 23. <i>Description of Packer's Island. History of Unadilla.</i> 1 v. |
| 7. <i>Waller's Life of Aeschylus the Great.</i> Plates. 1 v. | 24. <i>History of England.</i> 1 v. |
| 8. <i>Natural History of Insects.</i> 1 v. | 25. <i>History of the World.</i> 1 v. |
| 9. <i>Gay's Life of Lord Byron.</i> 1 v. | 26. <i>Memories of celebrated Persons.</i> 1 v. |
| 10. <i>Scott on Democracy and War.</i> 1 v. | 27. <i>Amusements in the Household.</i> 1 v. |
| 11. <i>Scott on Democracy and War.</i> 1 v. | 28. <i>St. Louis of Louisiana.</i> 1 v. |
| 12, 13. <i>Gay's Life History.</i> 1 v. | 29. <i>St. Louis of Louisiana.</i> 1 v. |
| 14. <i>Discovery and Adventure in the Pacific.</i> 1 v. | 30. <i>St. Louis of Louisiana.</i> 1 v. |
| 15. <i>Croft's Life of George IV.</i> 1 v. | 31. <i>St. Louis of Louisiana.</i> 1 v. |
| 16. <i>Discovery and Adventure in Africa.</i> 1 v. | 32. <i>St. Louis of Louisiana.</i> 1 v. |
| 17, 18, 19. <i>Columbus's Lives of Packer's Sculpture.</i> 1 v. | 33. <i>St. Louis of Louisiana.</i> 1 v. |
| 20. <i>James's History of Christianity and the Crusades.</i> 1 v. | 34. <i>St. Louis of Louisiana.</i> 1 v. |
| 21. <i>St. Louis's Life of Mary Queen of Scots.</i> 1 v. | 35. <i>St. Louis of Louisiana.</i> 1 v. |
| 22. <i>Russell's Ancient and Modern Egypt.</i> With plates. 1 v. | 36. <i>St. Louis of Louisiana.</i> 1 v. |
| 23. <i>Fletcher's History of the Pacific.</i> 1 v. | 37. <i>St. Louis of Louisiana.</i> 1 v. |
| 24. <i>Smith's Pictorial, Games, and Amusements.</i> 1 v. | 38. <i>St. Louis of Louisiana.</i> 1 v. |
| 25. <i>Brewster's Life of Sir Isaac Newton.</i> With plates. 1 v. | 39. <i>St. Louis of Louisiana.</i> 1 v. |
| 26. <i>Russell's Palestine, or the Holy Land.</i> With plates. 1 v. | 40. <i>St. Louis of Louisiana.</i> 1 v. |
| 27. <i>Memoirs of the Empress Josephine.</i> Plates. 1 v. | 41. <i>St. Louis of Louisiana.</i> 1 v. |

Classical Studies.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. <i>Life of W. Le B. By Rev. C. W. Le B.</i> 1 v. | 2. <i>Compendium of Education.</i> By Rev. Dr. H. H. H. 1 v. |
|---|--|

Boy's and Girl's Library.

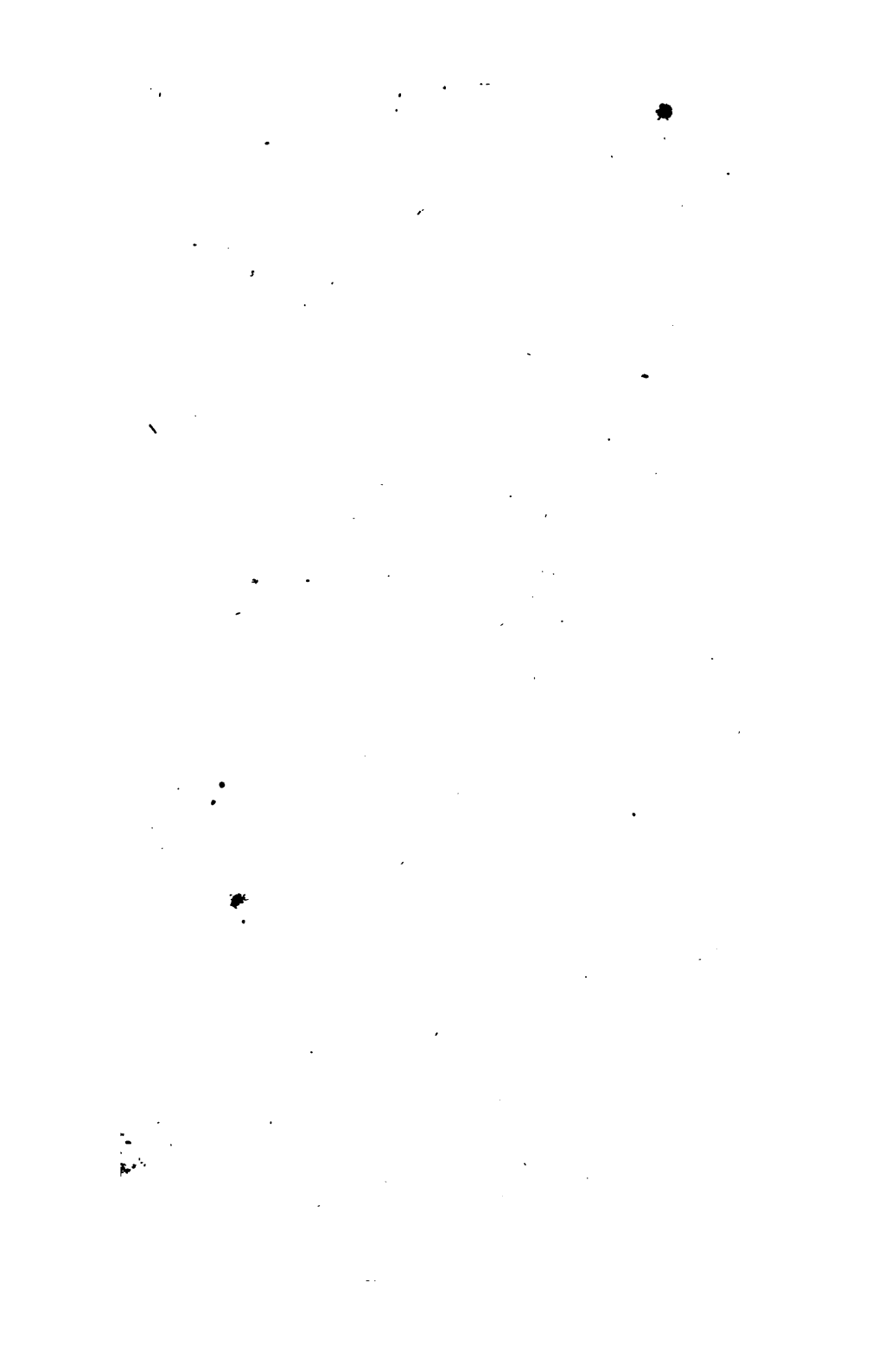
- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. <i>Lives of the Apostles.</i> 1 v. | 2. <i>St. Paul's Family Album.</i> 1 v. |
|---------------------------------------|---|

Standard Histories.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Gibbon's <i>Rome.</i> Maps. 4 v. | <i>History of Modern Europe.</i> By Roberton's Works. Plates. 3 v. |
|----------------------------------|--|

Library of Select Novels.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1, 2. <i>Cyril Thornton.</i> 2 v. | 17, 18. <i>The Stranger.</i> 2 v. |
| 3, 4. <i>Dutchman's Friends.</i> 2 v. | 19, 20. <i>Enigma.</i> 2 v. |
| 5, 6. <i>The Young Duke.</i> 2 v. | 21, 22. <i>Enigma.</i> 2 v. |
| 7, 8. <i>Anastasia.</i> 2 v. | 23, 24. <i>The Spy.</i> 2 v. |
| 9, 10. <i>Philip Angustus.</i> 2 v. | 25, 26. <i>Westward Ho!</i> By J. K. Paulding. 2 v. |
| 11, 12. <i>Calio Williams.</i> 2 v. | 27, 28. <i>Gravel Spa.</i> 2 v. |
| 13, 14. <i>The Club-Book.</i> 2 v. | 29, 30. <i>Henry Martineau.</i> 2 v. |
| 15, 16. <i>De Vere.</i> 2 v. | |



RECOLLECTIONS
OF
A CHAPERON.

EDITED BY LADY DACRE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

NEW-YORK:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY J. & J. HARPER,

NO. 82 CLIFF-STREET.

AND SOLD BY THE PRINCIPAL BOOKSELLERS THROUGHOUT THE
UNITED STATES.

1833.

22 400.7150
21436, 20

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY

1000 1000 0

1000

1000

1000 1000 1000

(1000 1000)

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

I WAS left a widow with seven daughters. I have married them all, or rather, I have let them marry themselves; for I never took any active measures towards bringing about a result which I own to be a desirable one in a family consisting of seven daughters and one son.

I have seen manœuvring mothers succeed; but I have as often seen them fail in their matrimonial speculations. I have seen dignified mothers with modest daughters pass year after year unnoticed and unsought; but I have also seen the unobtrusive daughters of retiring mothers form splendid alliances; and at the very beginning of my career as a chaperon, I came to the conclusion that, as there was no rule which could ensure success, it was safer and more respectable to do too little than to do too much; better simply to fail, than to fail and to be ridiculous at the same time.

Accordingly, when I had mounted my feathered hat and black velvet gown, or my white satin gown and flowered cap, as the occasion might require, and patiently taken my station upon the chair, seat, or bench which I could most conveniently appropriate to myself, I beguiled the weary hours by studying those around me, trusting for the rest to chance, and to the principles which I had endeavoured to impress upon the minds of my girls; viz. not to flirt so as to attract attention,—not to think too highly of their own pretensions,—and above all, not to be betrayed into laughing at any man before they knew him, by which means more than one girl of my acquaintance has been obliged, for consistency's sake, to repulse a person whom, upon further acquaintance, she might have sincerely preferred.

My daughters were not beautiful enough, nor did they marry brilliantly enough, to excite the jealousy of other mothers. I had brought them up to avoid a fault odious in all, but especially so in the young, that of being more ready to perceive the failings than the merits of their companions: we were, therefore, a popular family. I had myself the happy knack of being interested in the concerns and distresses of others, and I listened with pleasure to details however trifling: I had consequently many intimate friends.

As people never were afraid of me, transient emotions, and harmless weaknesses, which would have been concealed from a sterner, cleverer, or more important personage, were confessed, or, at all events, permitted to escape in a *tête-à-tête* with the good-natured, quiet, inoffensive Mrs. —. But what am I doing? I wish to preserve my incog., and only hope I have not already betrayed myself by the mention of my white satin, and my black velvet gowns.

I will write no more, lest some unguarded expression should give a clew to my name: I will simply add, that my last daughter having been comfortably established a year ago, "Othello's occupation is gone;" and my purse being somewhat drained by the purchase of so many *trousseaux*, I have occupied my leisure, and, I trust, shall recruit my finances, by portraying characters and feelings which I believe are true to nature, although under circumstances and in situations not founded on fact.

ELLEN WAREHAM.

Calantha.—Away, away, call not such passion love !
A man so loves his horse, his hound, his hawk,
For that these things to's pleasure minister ;
He's proud to boast such peerless beauty his—
Does gloat upon it—would have others gaze,
And pine with envy. What's this but self-love?
Now mark, Antenor ! he who loves indeed,
With his whole soul ! His study but to honour
His lady's name an hundred thousand ways !
His sole joy, her contentment ; and sole sorrow,
Her disquiet. He with true devotion
Approaches her, as something pure and holy,
His bright incentive to high deeds. The beacon
To light his path to virtue and to fame.

Old Manuscript Play.



ELLEN WAREHAM.

CHAPTER I.

Ten amor el arco quedo
Que soy niña y tengo miedo.

Spanish Romance.

IN a small but neat drawing-room, in the principal town of —shire, Captain Wareham and his family were assembled at breakfast. Captain Wareham himself was sitting with the newspaper in his hand, his back half-turned to the breakfast-table, and his feet resting on the fender; Caroline, his eldest daughter, was presiding over the teapot, Ellen, the second, was patiently waiting till the tea *had brewed*; the two elder boys were kicking at each other's legs under the table; the youngest daughter was strumming away at a most unmusical piano-forte; and the youngest boy was amusing himself by adorning his slate, on which he was supposed to be doing a sum, with specimens of the graphic art, in the shape of helmeted knights and galloping war-horses.

"Caroline," said Captain Wareham, "do not give me water bewitched, by way of tea, this morning, I entreat!"

"I hope it will be good, papa: the water does boil to-day."

Captain Wareham took his tea, and having added the cream and sugar, tasted it.

"Caroline, you have let the tea stand too long! You know I hate it when it gets that rough disagreeable taste."

"Shall I put in a little water, papa? It is very easy to make it weaker."

"No! there is no use in doing that. If the tea is once too strong, you cannot make it right by adding water.—Give me the toast."

Ellen handed him the toast.

"It is all cold and tough. I cannot eat it!"

"It has been here so long, dear papa; but you were so busy with the newspaper, I did not like to interrupt you."

"You know I hate cold toast!"

"Shall I ring, and ask for some more?"

"Ask for more! I never can teach any of my children, that people who are poor must conform to their means. One would think I was made of gold, to hear the wasteful manner in which you talk!"

"Shall I toast it afresh, papa?" interrupted Ellen; "that will make it almost as good as ever again."

"No, no! be quiet, child. How you pester me! Do you not see I am reading the newspaper? There is no possibility of understanding a word one reads, you all keep up such a clatter!"

George, who all this time had continued his attempts to reach Henry's feet, as they sat at opposite ends of the table, at length gave it a tremendous shake.

"Do be quiet, boys!" exclaimed Captain Wareham, in a voice of thunder; "and do stop that eternal strumming at the piano-forte—give one some peace, Matilda!"

Matilda, delighted to be released, jumped up from her half-finished tune, and ran to assist James in his labours at the alate.

"Caroline, why do you set Matilda to practise just at breakfast-time?"

"Why, papa, you said Miss Patterson was to come at ten o'clock for the future; and you said Matilda should practise an hour before she came; so I did not very well know how to help it."

"Nonsense! You always contrive to do the disagreeable thing."

He turned round, and was again absorbed in the important intelligence contained in the newspaper; for at that time Bonaparte had just returned from Egypt, and the proceedings in France were watched by all Europe with intense anxiety and interest. The second dish of tea remained by his side untasted.

After about a quarter of an hour, he turned angrily to Caroline, saying,

"Why on earth do you not send away the breakfast things? Nothing shortens the day so much as letting the breakfast remain late upon the table—this is another thing I can never teach you!"

"I thought you might wish to drink your tea, papa," answered Caroline, timidly.

"I do not want any more ; it is so horribly bad !" he replied. "And now, I suppose, we must have the weekly bills, and I must give you some money !"

Caroline's spirit sank within her. The first Monday in every month was to her a weary day, and she anticipated that this would indeed be Black Monday, as papa did not seem to be quite well.

The apparatus for the morning repast was removed. Caroline brought the household book, and the bills, and presented them, one by one to her father, who was horrified at the amount of each.

"Why, here is beef again !—there is no occasion to feed the whole family on beef ! If the servants have their beef on Sunday, surely that is enough. You know, Caroline, I can scarcely afford to live as I do, and yet it seems you become every day more expensive in your housekeeping."

"I am very sorry, papa, but you told me to have some luncheon in case the Jenkinsons called last Wednesday ; and you have often said you hated cold mutton, and that it was painful to you that any one should imagine you were inhospitable ; and I thought it did not make much difference, and there would be the cold beef, which always looks handsome."

"So, I suppose you mean to imply it is my fault that the bills are high. I am sure no man can spend less upon himself than I do ! I wish you would tell me where to get the money, that is all !"

The entrance of Miss Patterson, a prim, middle-aged lady, who came a few hours every day to superintend Matilda's education, put an end to the discussion. Captain Wareham paid the money without another word, took his hat and stick, and sallied forth to avoid the infliction of Miss Patterson, the music, &c.

Captain Wareham was a half-pay officer, with a broken constitution, and a very limited income. He had taken up his abode in the county-town, that his eldest daughter might have the advantage of going to the winter balls ; his second, that of receiving some finishing lessons in singing from the organist of the cathedral ; his third, that of having a day-governess ; and his youngest boy that of attending an excellent school as a day-scholar.

He was a dignified-looking man, very tall and thin, with a high pale forehead, light eyes and hair, and there was altogether something melancholy and gentlemanly in his appearance. His connexions were good, his conduct irreproachable,

deprecating tone, "and you know you are always annoyed if I do not look as nice as other girls, and so I thought you would wish Ellen to make a favourable impression at first. I have the beautiful gauze my aunt gave me, and I felt sure you would not like to see Ellen less well-dressed than me."

"Ah, well! I suppose it cannot be helped. I do not wish people to pity you for being shabbily dressed. I hate to be pitied."

At this moment a carriage-and-four drove up to the door. Ellen ran to the window.

"Oh, Caroline! it is Lady Besville and her daughters: run and take off that black apron. Dear me! the room is all in confusion with Matilda's lesson-books. There, put away the slate, and the back-board."

Ellen inherited something of her father's sensitiveness to the *qu'en dira-t-on* of the world.

"I wish it was summer," whispered Caroline, "or that papa could afford us two fires."

The room was rendered tolerably tidy for the reception of Lady Besville, who always paid an annual visit to the Wareham family, although she was not in the habit of visiting the other country town gentry. It was a sort of tribute to the respectability of their conduct, and of their connexions.

Lady Besville was duly astonished at Matilda's growth, she admired the stoutness of James, asked Ellen if she enjoyed the thoughts of her first ball, and said all the sweet little nothings which are civilities and attentions from the great to the little.

Captain Wareham pressed some luncheon upon her ladyship;—she owned she was very hungry, having had a long drive. Captain Wareham rang the bell with a vigorous pull, as if he felt a sumptuous repast only waited to be sent for, and, in an easy and confident tone, desired the one footman (who, if it had not been for his plush breeches and white stockings, would have been a footboy), to bring the luncheon.

Caroline knew the servants had just devoured the last morsel of cold meat: she saw the look of blank dismay with which her father's order was received by John, and she sat uneasily in her chair, wondering what would happen. She could not leave the room,—it would look so odd; and she scarcely knew whether to rejoice or to grieve, when she saw her father depart, ostensibly in search of a pamphlet on the times, which he particularly recommended to Lord Besville's perusal, but in fact, as Caroline believed, to take some energetic measures upon the subject of luncheon. She dreaded his coming to the know-

ledge of the unprovided state of the larder, and, on the other hand, she equally dreaded having her housekeeping brought to utter shame before strangers. Poor Caroline! she was not by nature a manager. She was meek and gentle, and, perhaps, if she had not been frightened, might have succeeded as well as her neighbours, but she always felt she should do wrong, and never ventured to do right. There is a certain portion of decision necessary even in the ordering of dinner, and choosing between a leg of mutton and a shoulder.

Captain Wareham, after a small delay, returned with the pamphlet, and he conversed with fluency and eagerness upon its contents. Ellen, meanwhile, had become tolerably intimate with Lady Harriet, who was also to make her first appearance at the approaching ball; and Caroline listened with a face expressive of much interest to the discussion upon the fates of nations, while she secretly revolved in her mind what would be the cook's resource in this unforeseen exigency. The half-hour which thus elapsed seemed to her interminable: she thought Lady Besville would be quite tired of waiting, and she saw her begin to fidget on her chair, and to look towards the window.

At this critical juncture Caroline heard the jingle of one glass against another, as John mounted the stairs. This delightful promise of a forthcoming repast of some sort or another was to her ears as the horn of a German post-boy when he approaches the town to the benighted traveller, or as the tinkling of the camel-bells of a caravan to a solitary pilgrim in the desert.

The door opened—the tray entered—Caroline cast a trembling furtive glance: to her delight and astonishment, she beheld a tongue, a fowl, a dish of puffs, some cakes, some fruit, and wine. She breathed more freely, and performed her part of hostess with ease and quietness. The Besvilles did ample justice to the meal, and departed impressed with the comfortable and respectable manner in which Captain Wareham lived, the good breeding of Caroline, and the good-humour and liveliness of her father.

But Caroline's troubles were to come. Captain Wareham reproached her for having no cold meat, and told her how he had been obliged to send, in one direction, to the eating-house to buy a cold fowl at twice its value—to the pastry-cook for some puffs—to the fruiterer's for some fruit, to conceal her bad housekeeping. "You would not have people go away from one's house hungry, would you? Though I am poor, I cannot submit to that."

Caroline knew that to remind him of what he had said the

day before, would only increase his wrath, and she bore it in unreplying meekness, while she secretly wondered whether Mr. Weston was likely to be more serious in his attentions than Major Barton had proved.

The momentous evening arrived: Captain Wareham looked with paternal pride at his two daughters as he led them into the ball-room—the fair and delicate Caroline, with her small but beautifully rounded form, her regular features, and her alabaster skin,—and the tall and sylph-like Ellen, whose beauty was of a loftier character. Her straight and clearly-defined eyebrows, her broad white forehead, and her noble cast of countenance, were softened and subdued by a pensive grace, which rendered her appearance as interesting as it was striking. The full white eyelids were fringed with long and black eyelashes which almost swept her cheeks; and when she raised those eyes, there was a liquid lustre in the depth of their dark blue which might have found its way to the coldest heart.

Mr. Cresford, a young and wealthy London merchant, was not one whose coldness rendered him proof against these same eyes. On the contrary, he was an impassioned and impetuous youth, who fell in love with Ellen at first sight, danced with her all night, sat by her at supper, and never left her side till he had handed her to her carriage.

The next morning the sisters were preparing to take their accustomed exercise, and Ellen had put on her common straw bonnet, when Caroline remonstrated.

“It is quite fine—you may just as well wear your Sunday bonnet to-day.”

“This will do very well for the garden. I promised Will Pollard to help him to pot the geraniums for the winter.”

“Surely, Ellen, you are not going to poke about in our little confined garden. Do let us walk into the town. There are all the people we met at the ball last night; we shall be sure to see some of them.”

“But I promised the gardener to help him. You know papa cannot afford to have him more than three days in the week, and if we do not assist him a little, the garden can never look nice.”

“Any other day will do just as well for your gardening. Now do, dear Ellen, let us take a good long walk, it will refresh us after the ball. I never knew you unwilling to oblige anybody before. Besides I must go to the shop to buy some things for George, before he returns to school; and I want you to help me. It is so difficult to give poor papa satisfaction. I am

sure I do my very best, but I do get so wearied, and so worried at home, what with the housekeeping, and the lessons, and having to keep the boys' things in order, and never being able to do any thing right, that I want a little relaxation."

Ellen yielded, for she often pitied Caroline, who was decidedly not made for the lot which had befallen her. She put on her best bonnet, and the three sisters sallied forth. From the shop they walked along the river-side, under the shade of some spreading elms, which made this terrace the favourite resort of the inhabitants of ——. They had not long been there before Mr. Cresford joined them.

He walked by Ellen's side, and any acute observer might have perceived, by the obsequious air, the flushed cheek, and the agitation of his whole demeanour, that his was not a common-place flirtation to kill an idle morning, but that his feelings were deeply interested. Ellen was shy and reserved, but her reserve only increased the ardour of the passion which had so suddenly been awakened in his breast.

The next day Ellen could not be persuaded to extend their walk beyond their own garden.

"When Mr. Cresford is gone away, Caroline, we will walk wherever you please, but I do not like appearing to seek him."

"Why do you dislike him? He is evidently smitten with you."

"I do not dislike him particularly, but I think I am more comfortable and happy gardening with Will Pollard; and if I liked to meet him ever so much, I had rather die than appear to seek him or anybody else."

"So would I, Ellen!" cried little Matilda, "when I grow up, I will be so proud! it shall never be said that I care for anybody."

"I am sure I should be sorry to do any thing forward," answered Caroline, "only one must take the air sometimes. Perhaps, however, you are both right, and I am sure I would not have any girl care for any man, till she is quite sure of him, and it is very difficult to know when they are in earnest."

CHAPTER II.

Cleantes—She'll be a castaway—my life upon't.

Hermione—Man argues from his fiercer will, nor knows

True virtue's quality in woman's breast.

My daughter, sir, is virtuous, and virtue

Will to herself subdue e'en rebel Nature.

Had she been linked in love with one her choice,

She had been all soul, following her wedded lord

Through life's worst perils, frankly, fearlessly ;

But matched, ere yet her young heart spoke, with one

She cannot love, she'll give her love to duty,

And cheerful, although passionless, perform it

Calmly, contentedly, nor ever dream

Of joys she must not know, and so pass on

Into the quiet grave.

Old Manuscript Play.

MR. CRESFORD soon found some excuse for calling upon Captain Wareham, and in the course of his visit contrived to give himself a commission to execute, which justified another visit, another, and another.

Captain Wareham thought the symptoms were auspicious, and entertained some hope of honourably disposing of one daughter in marriage, but Caroline, profiting by her own experience, warned Ellen not to place any reliance on these signs of preference.

"You do not know the world yet, Ellen," said she ; "you do not know how often the same sort of thing has happened to me. Remember Major Barton last winter, and poor Mr. Astell (however, I do think he would have proposed if he had lived). Talk to Mr. Cresford as much as you please, but do not let yourself like him, till he has actually proposed. Remember what I have already told you, a woman cannot guess whether a man is in earnest or not, till he does propose."

Ellen thought her sister was very prudent and sensible, and she resolved to follow her advice. Nor did she find the task a difficult one.

Mr. Cresford, although handsome, was not pleasing, and the very vehemence of his love rather alarmed and confused the young Ellen. This was the season of gayety at —, and there were frequent dinners and parties among the canons

and prebends. Caroline regularly asked Ellen every night, whether Mr. Cresford had proposed, and for ten days Ellen answered, "no, not quite." Caroline continued her warnings, and Ellen her watch over her heart.

At length Mr. Cresford waited one morning upon Captain Wareham, and in good set terms asked him for his daughter's hand. Captain Wareham accepted his proposal, and informed Ellen of the event.

There did not seem to exist a doubt in any of their minds as to what her answer would be. The whole question had been from the beginning whether or not he would come to the point, and the lady's privilege of saying no seemed in that family to be utterly forgotten. Ellen was too young and too timid to discover it for herself, and she found herself the affianced wife of a man whom a fortnight before she had never seen, and whom, during that fortnight, she had been taking care not to prefer.

The affair was decided. The lover was all rapture—Captain Wareham all satisfaction—Caroline all surprise that Mr. Cresford should have behaved in so gentlemanlike a manner, not keeping her sister in any uncertainty, but setting her mind at ease at once. She was too good-natured and too affectionate to feel any thing like envy, but she wished Captain Barton had behaved in the same noble manner to her.

Ellen was surprised not to find herself happier on so quickly arriving at that result, which had been the object of her sister's wishes for six years and a half. But she was afraid of Mr. Cresford. He was easily hurt, easily offended, he was expecting, and jealous; he would not allow her to go to any more of the balls; he scarcely liked to see her acknowledge, much less shake hands with, any of her former acquaintance. Ellen was subdued, rather than elated, by her approaching nuptials. Caroline one day remarked upon her unusual seriousness, and asked her if she and Mr. Cresford had not a lover's quarrel.

"Oh, no," replied Ellen, "but it is difficult you know, sister, to love a person all at once, particularly when one has been trying not to like him at all. However, I dare say I shall soon, when I am more accustomed to him. It is not easy to do just right, for a girl is not to like a man till he proposes, and then she ought to love him very much as soon as ever she is going to be married to him."

Mr. Cresford was the only son of wealthy parents, and was accustomed to find his wishes laws to those around him. His

father had died when he was barely twenty-one, and had left him at the head of a thriving mercantile house.

He fell in love with Ellen at first sight,—he proposed at once, had been accepted, and, following the course of his own impetuous passions, was now eager that the wedding-day should be fixed. Captain Wareham had no wish to postpone it, and in three weeks more Ellen left the paternal roof as the wife of Mr. Cresford.

She was astounded and confused at the whole thing; she had not been allowed time to become attached to him, even if he had been all a maiden's imagination could picture in its happiest day-dream. But there was a want of refinement in the headlong course of his love, a want of consideration; in fact, there was a selfishness, which did not win its way to the heart of a very modest, very young, and very sensitive girl.

In London she found herself surrounded by all the luxuries of life. She had an excellent house, a handsome equipage. He showered presents upon her—jewels and trinkets without number,—each new ornament daily invented to satisfy the caprice of the idle and the wealthy. His delight was to see his lovely bride's beauty set off to the utmost advantage. But she must be decked out for him alone; he was annoyed if any other eyes seemed to dwell with gratification upon the loveliness which he had taken such pleasure in adorning.

Cresford had a large circle of acquaintance, not, perhaps, in the first style of fashion, but among gentlemanlike and agreeable people. Persons with intellects as well cultivated, minds as refined, manners as essentially well-bred, as can be found in the highest coteries, though perhaps one of the initiated might perceive the want of that nameless grace which more than compensates for a certain coldness frequently pervading the most select *réunions*. The very fashionable are exceedingly afraid of each other. They may sometimes have been accused of insolence towards those whom they consider in a grade below themselves, but their worst enemies cannot say they do not stand in awe of each other. There was in Ellen a gentle dignity which, combined with her extraordinary beauty, would have caused her to be distinguished in any society: of course, therefore, in this she could not but excite notice and admiration. Yet proud as Cresford was of her, anxious as he was to show to the world how lovely was the bride he had chosen for himself, he never returned from a party or an assembly without a cloud on his brow, and something restless and suspicious in his manner.

She began to fear he was constitutionally jealous. Others came to the same conclusion. Young men in all ranks of life find peculiar pleasure in tormenting a jealous husband; and not all the shrinking modesty of Ellen's manners could prevent their openly showing the admiration they felt. She hoped, by the extreme quietness of her behaviour, to give him no cause for disquiet; but though she might avoid affording him any opportunity of blaming her, she could not prevent his being irritable and violent whenever they had mixed in any society.

She would gladly have led a very retired life, she would fain have dressed herself in a homely and unpretending style,—her whole object was to escape notice: but such was the nature of his love for her, that he was not satisfied unless her charms were set off by every ornament, and his fear of being laughed at was such, that he would not give occasion for saying he shut up his beautiful wife. Ellen was consequently obliged to mix in the world, and she learned to set a strict watch over her very looks, and to be tremblingly alive to the *on dits* of society. She, as well as her sister Caroline, was timid in her nature; she was, moreover, shy and reserved upon all subjects connected with the feelings, and she dreaded lest his jealous fancies should ever openly burst forth, and bring blame or ridicule on either of them. She had at times stood in awe of her father, but the fear she felt of her husband was more constant and unceasing.

Still she had been accustomed to humour and to yield to a capitious temper, and she considered that it was the lot of women to bear with the caprices of men. She frequently reminded herself of the gratitude she was bound to feel towards him for having taken her portionless from her father, and for the unbounded command of money which he allowed her. She excused his jealousy on account of the passionate love he evinced for her, and she concluded the two feelings were necessarily inseparable.

His generosity on the subject of money afforded her one great pleasure, that of making various presents to her sisters, and of assisting her family in divers manners. He took her eldest brother into his mercantile establishment, and she rejoiced in having thus been the means of relieving her father from one care which pressed most heavily upon his mind.

They had been married about four years, and Ellen was the mother of two lovely children, when the peace concluded between France and England, at the period when Bonaparte was First Consul, enabled the English to flock abroad. T

Mr. Cresford it was a matter of great importance to conclude some arrangement with foreign merchants. For this purpose he made up his mind to leave his wife for a month or two.

It was, however, most unwillingly that he tore himself away : it seemed as if some presentiment warned him not to depart. He postponed his journey from day to day, from week to week. At length his correspondents became impatient, and the day was fixed. He took Ellen and his children to reside with Captain Wareham during his absence, and she willingly promised to live in the strictest seclusion till his return ; but it was with a melancholy foreboding that he bade her adieu, and he returned again and again to take one more last lingering look at her beautiful face, as though he felt he might never again thus gaze on it.

CHAPTER III.

—Love's sooner felt than seen :

Oft in a voice he creeps down through the ear ;

Oft from a blushing cheek he lights his fire ;

Oft shrouds his golden flame in likest hair ;

Oft in a soft, smooth cheek doth close retire ;

Oft in a smile, oft in a silent tear ;

And if all fail, yet virtue's self will lure !

PHINEAS FLETCHER.

CAROLINE was now seven-and-twenty, and she had many histories to pour into Ellen's ear of the deceitful conduct of sundry naval or military heroes, and briefless barristers. One old nabob had laid his fortune at her feet, but he was too disagreeable, and she preferred even the eternal household bills, and the last finish of Matilda's education, and the increased peevishness of her father's temper, to being the wife of Mr. Pierson.

But there was a person—a most amiable man—a clergyman—who had long appeared to prefer her—who did not pay her compliments, but who often visited them in their quiet home, and who admired her for qualities which had never attracted the notice of the captains nor the majors—her patience, her sweet temper, and her absence of selfishness. She owned to Ellen that, if circumstances ever enabled him to come forward, she should rejoice in the chances which had prevented her marrying earlier.

In the course of a short time Ellen had an opportunity of becoming personally acquainted with Mr. Allenham, and she thought her sister would indeed be a fortunate woman if she should ever become his wife.

To Ellen his intentions seemed manifest; but Caroline, who had so often been deceived, scarcely ventured to believe what she so much wished: all pleasure in the society of others was, however, completely gone, and she sighed to fix the affections which had so long been without a resting-place upon a person for whom she could feel entire respect, and in whom she could place complete reliance. Caroline was now as little inclined to mix in the world as Ellen, and Mr. Cresford would have been satisfied if he could have witnessed the retirement in which they lived.

He had not been gone more than a month, when the sudden renewal of hostilities gave rise to the greatest alarm among those who had friends upon the continent. Still, no one was prepared for that gross violation of all the usual courtesies between civilized nations, of all the charities of human life, which astounded the European world, when Bonaparte detained the harmless traveller, the peaceful merchant, and doomed them to drag out the best years of their lives in weary, unprofitable imprisonment at Verdun, or in the fortress of La Bitché.

At first, no one could believe that this would last; they all looked to a speedy termination of their captivity. Ellen received letters from her husband, who was among the *détenus* at Verdun, which filled her with pity and alarm. His jealousy, which could not be completely lulled when his virtuous and modest wife was constantly under his own eye, now raged like a devouring flame. He threatened to commit some crime which could only be atoned by his life rather than endure the living death which consumed him. He braved the authorities—he would not accept his parole—he would not preclude himself from attempting every means in his power to again see the wife whom he adored. His letters were written in a state of mind bordering on distraction. In vain Ellen described to him her quiet mode of existence, entreated him to wait with patience till he could return in health and safety to his family, and promised faithfully to continue in the seclusion which he had prescribed. She communicated to him her intention of taking a cottage near her father and sisters, where the children might have the benefit of country air, and where she might be in some measure under the protection of her father, without joining in the society of the town.

The other partners in Mr. Cresford's house were now obliged to transact the business. All that could be done was to await the events which time might bring forth, and meanwhile take every opportunity of transmitting to him funds which might enable him to exist in such comfort as might be found within the walls of a prison.

Ellen never deviated from the line of conduct which she had marked out for herself. She felt perfectly confident that her husband would soon return, and she so dreaded what might be his anger if he heard of her having joined in any the most innocent amusement, that she never left her home except to visit her father, and she never received any one except her own immediate relations. She shrank from the appearance or the suspicion of the slightest impropriety with as much sensitive horror as many would from any actual breach of decorum.

The even tenor of Ellen's monotonous life was one day most agreeably broken in upon by the entrance of Caroline, who, with a face of joyous mystery, made her appearance at her sister's cottage immediately after breakfast.

"I have such news for you, Ellen. You have been right all along, and Mr. Allenham has proposed. He came to dinner yesterday, and told papa that his uncle's friend, Lord Covedale, had presented him to the living of Longbury, and that he might now look forward to possessing a competency, and that he had long been attached to me; and then he says that the house is a very nice one, and that he is to remove to it from his curacy in about six months.

"But you do not tell me what answer you have given him," replied Ellen, smiling.

"Oh, Ellen, do not laugh at me; it would be affectation in me to pretend I am not very, very happy at the prospect before me. You know well enough that I have long preferred him to any one, but you cannot guess how ardently I wish I had never before fancied myself in love. All that has gone before seems to me now like a dream. My former likings have been nothing compared to this. Still I would give the world that my heart was quite, quite fresh and pure; that I could have given it to him wholly and solely. I envy you, Ellen, having married so early that your feelings had never been tampered with, as mine have been."

Ellen was surprised at the warmth with which Caroline spoke, and thought in her heart that she had never felt all this for Mr. Cresford. Caroline resumed,—

"I wonder how a being so good, so superior, so excellent as Mr. Allenham, can have ever found any thing to please him in such a poor weak frivolous creature as I am! I do feel so grateful to him! And I am sure if the devotion of my life can render me worthy of him, I may deserve him in that manner, though I can in no other."

Ellen was astonished at this burst of feeling in her sister. She had seen her, as she believed, in love before, that is to say, she had seen her pleased and flattered by the attentions of men; she had seen her ardently desiring to get away from her home, and she had seen her unhappy when a flirtation ended in nothing; but she had never before seen her love with all the devotion of which an affectionate heart is capable. A real true attachment exalts and refines the mind, and Mr. Allenham was a person with whom no one could associate without becoming better.

The meekness and forbearance with which Caroline bore the eternal worry of her father's temper, the asperity of which had increased with years, first attracted him; he admired her beauty (for a woman of seven-and-twenty, provided she enjoys good health, is as pretty as ever she was), and her evident pleasure in his preference, which when it is accompanied with modesty, proves an almost irresistible charm to most men, combined to fix his affections. Her kind manner to all inferiors, and her gentle attention to any of the poor with whom she was brought in contact, satisfied his reason that she would make the best of wives for a clergyman. Nor was he mistaken in this expectation.

But Captain Wareham, whose disposition inclined him to look on the dark side of every picture, now felt somewhat unhappy at the thoughts of losing the daughter who had been so long accustomed to his ways; although he had often been bitterly disappointed at Caroline's failing to make a good establishment; a disappointment which he had been at no pains to conceal, and which did not contribute to make her own fall more lightly upon the poor girl.

"I suppose you must marry Mr. Allenham, Caroline; but what is to become of me?" he one day said, in a desponding tone. "How can a man see to all the details of a household, and the boys, and every thing?"

"Why, papa, you always said I was but a bad house-keeper," replied Caroline, who in her new-born happiness, and brightened prospects, had found a certain degree of courage, and sometimes ventured to reply half-playfully to her father's

lamentations—"You will do all the better without me, I dare say."

"No, no! I shan't! You have been a good girl, Caroline; and I shall not be able to do at all well without you. You will all marry, and I shall be left alone in my old age."

"Why, papa," interrupted Matilda, "I have heard you regret a hundred times that Caroline did not marry; and say that it preyed upon your mind to think that we were unprovided for; and that if we were but married you should be quite happy."

"In the mean time, my dear papa," said Caroline, "Matilda can take my place. She is seventeen now, and I was not older when my poor mother died."

"Ah! but she is not so steady as you were! I cannot manage you, Matilda, as I can Caroline," answered Captain Wareham, in whose estimation Caroline had risen wonderfully, now he was going to lose her.

"Well, then, I will manage you, papa, and that will be much best," replied the blunt and light-hearted Matilda, who was not easily either daunted or vexed. "I am so glad Caroline is going to marry that dear, good Mr. Allenham, that I shall not mind casting up those abominable bills. But I will tell you what, papa, you must not scold me, as you do Caroline—I shall never bear it as she has done."

Caroline looked at Matilda, and tried to silence her, but without effect. And strange to say, Captain Wareham would bear from Matilda jokes, and even lectures, which he would never have endured from her elder sisters. The fact was, that Matilda had a high spirit. She meant no harm; she did not mind a sharp word; and she gradually obtained a sort of mastery over her father.

The marriage was not to take place till Mr. Allenham was settled at Longbury, but all things proceeded placidly and cheerfully with the Wareham family, except that the letters which Ellen received from Mr. Cresford were more and more distressing. They were written in a state of dreadfully low spirits. He complained of mental and bodily miseries. Still she was little prepared for the shock which awaited her, when one morning she read in the papers an official return from the depôt at Verdun, and among the deaths she saw the name of Charles Cresford, Esq.!

VOL. I.—C

CHAPTER IV.

And such the colouring fancy gave
To a young, warm, and dauntless chief,—
And as a lover hails the dawn
Of a first smile, so welcomed he
The sparkle of the first sword drawn
For vengeance and for liberty.

LALLA ROOKE.

Buscas en Roma a Roma o peregrino
Y en Roma misma a Roma no la hallas,
Cadaver son las que ostentò murallas
Y tumba de sí propio el Aventino.

SONATA DE QUEVEDO.

THE shriek which Ellen involuntarily uttered brought her maid to her assistance. Her father and sister were sent for, and soon arrived to support and to console her.

Though she had never been able to return the passionate love which her husband had evinced for her; though she had never loved him as she was capable of loving, still she was dutifully attached to him, and she mourned for him with sincerity and truth. She expected to receive some parting word, some last injunctions, from one who had been so fervently devoted to her. But nothing of the kind ever reached her. She had no friends among the *détenus* to whom she could write, and she was obliged to rest contented with no further details of the melancholy event, than the report of Colonel Eversham, who had been one of those who followed his remains to the grave, and who had soon afterward effected his own return to England. He told her that Cresford had made various and desperate attempts to escape, which had all failed, and that his friends attributed his illness to mental agitation, as he did not seem to labour under any particular or positive complaint.

She heard, with some satisfaction, that his remains had been decently deposited in the Protestant burying-ground without the town, and that a considerable number of the most respectable of his fellow-prisoners had attended his funeral.

She grieved sincerely for his untimely fate, and she felt it the more from the belief that his passion for her, and the jealous feelings which he could not master, had, in all probability, hastened his end.

By her marriage settlements she was entitled to a handsome

jointure, for poor Cresford was noble and generous with regard to money, and did not dole out the jointure of the wife according to the fortune she brought, but proportioned it to his capabilities of providing for her. The partners preserved a share in the business for her son, and her daughter was also amply portioned.

Ellen continued to live in the pretty cottage, in which she had for some time resided. After a short delay the marriage of Caroline and Mr. Allenham took place, and all things resumed the even tenor of their course. Ellen found pleasure in the society of her children, whose opening intelligence rendered them each day more capable of becoming her companions, and she devoted herself to the pleasing task of leading their young hearts and minds into the right way.

At the end of the first six months of her widowhood she paid a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Allenham, and it was a cordial to her heart to see poor Caroline, who had always been frightened and subdued at home, the joyous creature she now was. Her adoration of her husband knew no bounds: she thought him the best, the cleverest, the wisest of human beings. Her loving heart had at length found its proper resting-place, and her humble service and devotion would have made any man, except Mr. Allenham, appear in the light of a tyrant. But he was so gentle, and so kind, he smiled so gratefully at the little attentions which she incessantly paid him, he so habitually preserved towards her the sort of polished deference with which a man should always treat a woman (in manner, at least, though he need not the more yield to her in deeds and actions), that Ellen began to think it was possible for matrimony to be a much happier state than she had found it.

It was not long after her arrival at Longbury, that she was one day walking with her sister and her children in a retired green lane, which was nearly bowered over by the trees on each side, when a gentleman on horseback approached. A widow in her weeds is always an object of some interest, and the horseman was wondering who that graceful creature could be,—he was watching the sportive boundings of her children, without attending to his own path, when a bough knocked off his hat just as he was about to pass, and was trying to ascertain whether the face corresponded with the form he admired. The little boy ran to pick it up, and advanced fearlessly toward the horse. Ellen turned round, half-alarmed for her child. The stranger leaped to the ground to receive the hat, saying at the same time, "Thank you, my fine fellow; you are a brave boy."

Ellen looked up with a pleased smile at the commendation of her darling George, and the stranger thought he had never in his life seen so beautiful a vision as that of the young widow with her close cap, her marble forehead, her straight-marked eyebrows, and those lustrous eyes, which gleamed so softly from beneath the hanging crape of her widow's bonnet. He bowed with profound respect, remounted his horse, and rode on.

He longed to look back, but there was something so serenely pure and holy in the expression of her countenance, that he felt it would be almost sacrilege to betray even common admiration.

Caroline, whose career as a country town beauty had made her somewhat alive to the glances of passers by, could not help saying to Ellen, "That gentleman seemed quite struck when you turned round: I saw him give a start of surprise, and the colour came into his face."

"Oh, Caroline, how can you talk in that manner? there is something horrid in the notion of a widow exciting any feeling but pity." Ellen's delicacy shrank from such an idea, and they proceeded on their way in silence.

The stranger was a visiter at Lord Coverdale's, and at dinner he mentioned having seen this lovely widow in the green lane. "Oh, it must have been Mrs. Cresford," said Lady Coverdale; "she is our clergyman's sister-in-law, and they say she is very handsome. I am dying to see her, but she never appears when I call on Mrs. Allenham. Her husband was one of the *détenus*, and the poor man died six or seven months ago in France."

Mr. Hamilton left Coverdale Park the next day, but

"Those eyes of deep and most expressive blue,"

came between him and his midnight dreams

"Often than any other eyes he ever knew."

Ellen returned to her cottage, where she still continued to reside, devoting great part of her liberal jointure to the assistance of her father, and to the advancement of her brothers in their various professions. The eldest was active and industrious, and was, through her means, enabled to become a partner, though but to a small amount, in the concern.

The first year of Ellen's widowhood had more than expired, and she again visited her sister and Mr. Allenham. She had changed her mourning, and etiquette no longer required that she should persevere in her seclusion.

She now accompanied the Allenhams when they dined at Coverdale Park, and all who met her were struck by her beauty and attracted by her manners. Though her countenance still retained its habitually pensive expression, a smile would now occasionally light up her features, and he must have been a cold critic who could perceive any fault in the perfection of her loveliness.

One day when they arrived at Coverdale Park, Ellen found herself greeted with a bow of profound respect, and a smile of recognition, by a tall, distinguished-looking man, of whom she had not the slightest recollection. She acknowledged his salutation in the polite half-doubting manner which is usual on such an occasion. Lady Coverdale immediately introduced him as Mr. Hamilton, and added that he had returned from a solitary ride last year, quite enchanted with her noble boy, who had so fearlessly brought him his hat, under the very feet of his horse.

Ellen remembered the circumstance, and the name of Hamilton fell on her ear as being connected with a romantic history, not common in these unchivalrous days.

Mr. Hamilton, when scarcely twenty, had taken his only sister to Naples for the recovery of her health. After having watched her gradual decline with tender and almost feminine attention, he had committed to the grave the remains of his only near relation, and found himself, without any tie, alone in a foreign land, at the moment when Bonaparte's invasion of Italy had awakened the love of liberty, which, though slumbering, was not totally extinguished in the souls of a few of her sons. With the true English spirit which considers as brethren those engaged in the struggle for freedom, he felt warmly for that lovely land—

“Italia a cui feo la sorte
Dono infelice di beltà!”

On several occasions he fought as a volunteer among the Italians, whom, in the enthusiasm of youth, he venerated as the descendants of the ancient Romans, passing over in his imagination the many centuries during which the national character had been degraded by submission to foreign powers. He forgot that the natives of the soil had for ages past allowed themselves to be mastered and controlled by hireling troops of strangers, and hoped that if once restored to independence, they would rise regenerate from their ashes.

He had formed an ardent friendship with a young Italian,

Count Adolfo Melandri, who was in command of a small squadron of troops. He acted as a sort of aid-de-camp to his friend, and fought by his side with all the generous impetuosity of his character. The star of Bonaparte, however, was in the ascendant : neither Melandri's nor young Hamilton's heroism could do more than rouse the spirit of those immediately around them.

Many of the states had been compelled to purchase an armistice by the sacrifice of their treasures of art. Melandri's indignation knew no bounds. His national pride was touched in the tenderest point, and in a skirmish which occurred shortly afterward between his squadron and the advanced-guard of the French, in which his dispirited men were on the point of yielding, he dashed with headlong desperation into the midst of the enemy's troops.

Hamilton, who loved his friend with passionate devotion, and regarded him as the one being in whom the spirit of the olden time still survived, watched over his safety with almost religious veneration.

They both performed prodigies of valour ; but at length Melandri sunk, covered with wounds, and faint from the loss of blood. Hamilton stood over the body of his friend, defending it with the energy of despair, and firmly resolved that while he retained life, it should never fall into the hands of the foe. The troops in the mean time rallied, and, returning to the charge, drove back the enemy. Hamilton was found still protecting the almost lifeless form of the Italian chief, which he never quitted for a moment, but bore in his own arms back to the intrenchments. His efforts to save his friend were, however, unavailing : Melandri had found the death he sought, and only survived long enough to express his gratitude to Hamilton, whose gallant feat was soon noised abroad, and reached the ears of many who were not personally acquainted with him.

The surrender of Mantua put an end to all idea of further resistance. Italy allowed herself quietly to be plundered of all her most precious and holy ornaments, even including the famous image of our Lady of Loretto, and Hamilton in disgust abandoning the wretched land returned to his own free and happy country. His paternal estates were considerable, and he resolved to devote himself in private to the welfare of those who were dependent upon him, and in public to the preservation of that liberty which he believed to be the basis of all that ennobles man. He distinguished himself in Parliament, at first, perhaps, by too great vehemence, on the liberal side ; but his own clear head and maturer judgment soon tempered what might have

been extravagant in his enthusiasm, and at the age of nine-and-twenty he was as practically a useful member of society as he had originally been a romantic advocate of liberty.

Ellen, who long ago had accidentally heard the history of his achievements, looked on him with a certain degree of respect, as the hero who, to her girlish imagination, had realized the stories of Paladins of old. It was with pleasure, therefore, that she found herself seated by him at dinner.

His appearance and his address did not disappoint her. His flashing eye seemed formed "to threaten and command;" his athletic form might well single-handed have kept at bay a host of common men; while she could imagine that from those expressive lips might flow streams of eloquence to sway the listening senate. Still he was peculiarly simple and straightforward: with all his fame about him he had a frank manner, as though what was said by him carried with it no more weight than if it had been uttered by the most undistinguished individual in the room. Yet every thing he said was well said; all showed reflection, reading, sound judgment, and refined taste. He was, in all respects, so superior to any one with whom Ellen had ever yet been thrown, that he appeared to her a being of another order.

The enthusiasm which we have described as being a leading feature of his character, although tempered by judgment in political matters, was still all there; and the impression produced by the first sight of Ellen in her weeds, was not weakened by further acquaintance. The lightning of her smile, when usurping the place of her usually pensive expression, reminded him of the days of youthful romance, when he and his friend Melandri used to study Petrarch together, and reading of the "*lampeggiar del angelico riso*," would picture to themselves what must have been that Laura, who could render the poet,

"Si da se stesso diviso
E fatto singular da l'altra gente."

He now thought, if she had resembled Ellen, there was nothing to marvel at in the poet's long and hopeless devotion.

During the two years which she had passed in retirement, she had read a great deal; and the education which she had thus given herself, had tended more to cultivate her mind than all the accomplishments with which governesses cram the common run of young ladies. The more he saw of her, the more he became convinced that the qualities of her head and heart fully corresponded with the loveliness of her person.

Lord and Lady Coverdale found their most agreeable friend, Mr. Hamilton, vastly more willing to prolong his visit than usual. He seemed much struck with the excellence of Mr. Allenham's opinions upon the subject of the poor laws, and he frequently walked to the parsonage, to discuss the subject with him.

The eagerness with which Mr. Hamilton accepted their invitation to repeat his visit, made them begin to suspect that the youthful widow had more to say to the attractions of the parsonage than Mr. Allenham and the poor laws. Still, though he evidently admired Mrs. Cresford, there was nothing which could justify any reports. He was so afraid of alarming her by any indiscreet avowal of his preference, that he continued merely to seek the society of the family in general.

Caroline, however, who was not so very delicate upon such subjects as her sister, could refrain no longer.

"Well, Ellen! I suppose, now you have been seven months out of your weeds, I may venture to say that Mr. Hamilton admires you? and it is my belief, though I am not apt to place much reliance on men in general, it is my belief, he intends to propose to you."

"Oh no, Caroline! he has never said any thing like it." But Ellen's heart beat quicker, and the colour mounted in her cheeks.

"Yes, yes! you think so too! You are blushing ten times more than when poor Mr. Cresford proposed." (Caroline always disliked Mr. Cresford, for she was exceedingly afraid of him!)

"Hush, Caroline! Do not speak so of my poor husband! He was very fond of me; and nothing in the world should ever induce me to do any thing that was the least disrespectful towards his memory."

"Well, but you are not bound to remain a widow from the age of three-and-twenty for evermore!"

"I am not out of mourning yet, Caroline."

No more passed; but this conversation made Ellen appear more conscious, and less at her ease in Mr. Hamilton's presence, than she had previously done. From this sign he gathered hope.

The remarks of friends, the quizzing of acquaintances, the reports of the world, greatly accelerate matters when there already exists a real preference, though they often completely nip a slight one in its bud. There is a particular moment at which they fan the flame, and a previous one at which they blow it out.

CHAPTER V.

What voice is this, thou evening gale,
That mingles with thy rising wail,
And as it passes sadly seems
The faint return of youthful dreams.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

MR. HAMILTON's manner became more and more marked, and before the expiration of his second visit to Lord Coverdale's, he one day took courage and spoke his sentiments to Ellen.

She received his avowal with all the confusion of a girl who, for the first time, hears expressions of love addressed to her. It was that now, for the first time, she felt the passion herself. She could not deny her preference, and he was made happy by hearing from her own lips that she esteemed him, that she believed she could be happy as his wife.

But she persisted in a resolution to see him no more till the two years of her widowhood had expired, and till then not even to correspond with him. He thought her delicacy rather overstrained—he thought her almost prudish—but a man does not love or value a woman the less for erring on the side of decorum, especially when he is confident he has undivided possession of her heart; and the speaking eyes, the trembling hand, the faltering voice, all assured him that such was the case.

She made him promise to confide to no one their engagement, and he tore himself away, to get through the four months which intervened as best he might. He almost repented having spoken to her at all, and at moments doubted whether the delightful certainty of being loved quite compensated for the loss of her society.

She, on her part, half-repented of her decision in banishing him, and quite repented of her prohibition to correspond. Her affection for him increased rapidly in absence. This is frequently the case with women. When in the presence of the person they love, reserve and modesty prevent their freely giving way to what they feel, but in absence they dwell without fear on every word and look, and the imagination supplies food to the feelings.

Ellen consulted with herself whether she should impart what

had occurred to her sister, and upon the whole she thought it best to do so. It seemed unkind to conceal such an important circumstance from one who took so tender an interest in all that concerned her, and moreover, she should have some one to whom she could expatiate upon the perfections of Mr. Hamilton.

Caroline was half-angry at not having been at once let into the secret, but she was so pleased at the prospect of her sister's enjoying such happiness as she now knew, that she soon got over her little vexation.

As Ellen expected, she proved an invaluable confidante in one respect; she listened with delight to any tale of love; but in another respect she rendered the task she had imposed upon herself more difficult, as she was constantly arguing with Ellen upon the overstrained delicacy of sending Mr. Hamilton away for the next few months. But the more Ellen longed to break it, the more firmly she adhered to her determination. She accused herself of ingratitude towards him who was the father of her children, in feeling so very happy as she did, and she resolved to pay this tribute of respect to his memory.

The four months elapsed. Ellen had remained all this time with her sister, and it was to Longbury that Mr. Hamilton returned, when the time of his probation was over.

If Ellen's passion had increased in absence, Mr. Hamilton's had not cooled, and never were two people more thoroughly attached, more romantically in love, and what, in the long run, conduces still more to lasting happiness, more entirely suited in disposition, than Ellen and her future husband.

Their approaching marriage was now declared, and Lady Coverdale rallied Mr. Hamilton upon his thirst for information concerning the poor laws.

Captain Wareham, who was an affectionate father, although an irritable man, rejoiced in the bright prospects of his daughter, and he was much gratified by the connexion. Mr. Hamilton's situation in life was such as to render his alliance eligible to any one, in however high a station; and to a man who had been reduced by poverty below his original position in the scale of society, it was peculiarly satisfactory.

The marriage was to take place at Longbury, and after the delays necessary for settlements, &c., the day was fixed. Mr. Allenham performed the ceremony. Her father gave her away. There was no pomp; Ellen wished to have the whole quiet and unostentatious. Deeply as she was attached to Mr. Hamilton—confident as she was in his love for her, much as her reason, as well as her heart, approved of the step she

was about to take, a vague dread came over her as the day approached. Sounds as of other days were ringing in her ears. At times she almost fancied she heard the cathedral bells of her native place, the chime of the Minster clock striking the quarters.

Who has not, without any concatenation of ideas which he can trace, when dropping asleep perhaps, or when plunged in a dreamy revery, felt as it were the vibration of well-known sounds, and with effort roused himself to the recollection that he was far away from the home which was thus brought to his mind?

On the eventful morning, the full deep swell of the cathedral bells, which rang out so sonorously on the morning of her first marriage, seemed to make themselves heard through the merry peal of the three or four tinkling bells which were all the boast of Longbury church.

As Mr. Allenham pronounced the words, "Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder," that sound again rang in her ears—a mist came over her eyes—she fancied it was Mr. Cresford's hand in which hers was placed, and she fainted in her husband's arms.

CHAPTER VI.

For contemplation he, and valour formed ;
For softness she, and sweet attractive grace ;
He for God only, she for God in him.

MILTON.

THE last few words of the ceremony were quickly hurried over. Ellen was supported into the vestry, where she quickly recovered ; and the circumstance of a bride's fainting was not an event of such rare occurrence as to excite much surprise.

Mr. Hamilton's place was situated in a lovely country on the borders of Sussex and Surrey. Hanging woods, extensive oak copses mixed with birch, sandy lanes, hedges which are enlivened by large hollies with their glossy leaves and their red berries—wild patches of heath, studded with juniper-bushes—fern and innumerable wild flowers in the shaws and dingles—banks blue with violets, and dells yellow with primroses, are the characteristics of that most enjoyable part of England,

Belhanger, which was the name of his place, was in the Elizabethan style. A spacious hall, in which was an immense fireplace, surmounted by the antlers of some patriarchal stag, communicated with a large low oak dining-room, and through some smaller apartments to a drawing-room, which was hung with tapestry, and adorned with beautiful oak carving; the crossings of the beams in the ceiling were ornamented with wooden rosettes, in the most antique taste, while the rest of the room was provided with all the essentials requisite for modern comfort. A broad and massive staircase of black-oak led, as is usual with buildings of that period, to a gallery on the upper floor, which extended the whole length of the south front, and which, with its two fireplaces, and its innumerable windows of all shapes and sizes, admitting every ray of sun, was one of the most delightful winter apartments imaginable.

The exterior of the mansion was as irregular as the most ardent lover of the picturesque could desire. It was built of gray-stone, and composed of gable ends of every possible angle. As its name indicated, it was built upon the side of a hill, which had originally been covered with hanging woods. The woods had been partially cleared away near the house; and a sloping lawn led down to the small but romantic deer-park in the valley.

Ellen thought Belhanger the very *beau idéal* of an English manorial house, and if she had not been too much in love, and too happy in the affections of such a man as Mr. Hamilton, to find room in her heart for emotions that were not connected with him, she would have thought the possession of such a place as Belhanger an additional pleasure.

The poor people, too, were a more primeval race than those who have not lived in that part of the world would expect to find at so short a distance from the metropolis. The bright blue smock-frocks which are there the common dress of the men, and the red cloaks which the women still wear, gave a picturesque appearance to the peasant congregation as they trooped out of church, and wound down the steep road, by the beech-crowned knoll.

Ellen was charmed with all she saw, but perhaps she would have been equally charmed had her home been less perfect in itself, for she had that within which would have made a cottage appear to her a palace—a desert a paradise.

The judicious kindness of Mr. Hamilton to her children, the eldest of whom was now six years old, gave him still another claim on her affections and her gratitude. He coun-

selled with her on the best course of education, the proper method of training a boy's mind, and entered into the subject with all a father's eagerness and anxiety. Ellen rejoiced that she had given her son such a protector, and looked forward to his making, under such guidance, a useful and an exemplary member of society.

Mr. Hamilton found in Ellen new charms, new virtues, each succeeding day. She was one of those shrinking and sensitive creatures who cannot put forth half their powers of pleasing except in the intimacy of domestic life, and under the fostering hand of kindness. Before her first marriage she had been but a child, a timid, frightened child—while the wife of Mr. Cresford, although adored by himself, he had been so fearful of her appearing too attractive in the eyes of others, that she had acquired the habit of trying to glide through life unobserved, in order to avoid any ebullitions of jealousy on his part, rather than of attempting to shine as an agreeable person. She was astonished and delighted when she saw her husband's expressive eyes follow her as she spoke, and gleam on her with kindly pride when others seemed to admire her.

Life was to her a new state of existence; not that she had hitherto been an unhappy person; she had always repeated to herself how much cause she had for gratitude; but the inward dancing of the heart she had never before experienced, and she often said to her husband, "Algernon, you make me too happy. This cannot last; something must happen: I do not deserve to be so blessed above the rest of womankind."

He would reply with a smile, "Do you fancy, Ellen, you are the only woman whose husband loves her?"

"No, but I am the only woman in the world who am loved by you. Am I not?" she added, with a playful glance of entire confidence in his devotion.

When Parliament met, they repaired to London, and she then moved in a sphere vastly more elevated than that to which she had been introduced as Mrs. Cresford. But she had so much native grace and dignity that she did not appear to be transplanted into a new soil, but rather to be now restored to that which was natural and congenial to her.

She had the rapture of hearing her husband spoken of with respect, and of seeing him treated with deference by every one. By his own party he was looked up to as one of its most influential members, more from the weight of his personal character than from that of his property and situation, although they also were of considerable importance. By his opponents

he was considered as the one fair man, who, though decided in his own opinions, was ready to render justice to the uprightness of those who differed from him. There can be no condition of life happier than that of Ellen at this moment, none more respectable in the scale of human beings than that of the wife of an Englishman of unblemished reputation, who holds a distinguished position in the senate of that nation whose laws and constitution have been the admiration and the model of nearly every civilized country in both hemispheres.

Ellen again became a mother, and the birth of a little girl, if possible, cemented more strongly the bond of union between herself, her husband, and her children.

Nearly two years had now elapsed since she had become the happy wife of Mr. Hamilton, and he had for nearly two years enjoyed the society of the lovely and devoted woman for whom his affection daily increased, as her valuable qualities continually opened upon him. She was adored by all around. The poor showered blessings upon her name whenever it was mentioned,—their richer neighbours had nothing but acts and words of kindness to record of her. Her eldest brother took every opportunity that his avocations allowed him to run down to Belhanger. Her father, when with Mr. Hamilton, seemed to lose his captiousness, for there is a magic in very high breeding which renders any ebullition of temper almost impracticable. Matilda, who was become a fine showy girl, often passed some time with her sister Ellen, and had profited much by her example and advice.

Mr. and Mrs. Allenham were at this moment in the house; Lord and Lady Coverdale and their daughter had just arrived, and some other persons, political friends of Mr. Hamilton's.

Lady Coverdale had been telling Ellen she thought her the most fortunate woman in the world; she had been speaking of Mr. Hamilton, whom she had known from his infancy, in terms which even Ellen thought worthy of the theme, and had been saying how happy she should esteem herself if she could ever see her daughter blessed with such a husband, and possessed of such a home: Algernon's friends had been gayly complimenting him upon his taste and his good fortune, and declaring they had sufficient discrimination to appreciate such a woman, if they could only have the good fortune to meet with any one at all resembling Mrs. Hamilton, when one morning at breakfast Ellen received a letter from her brother, enclosing one directed to her as Mrs. Cresford, and addressed to the house in London which she had formerly inhabited.

The postmark was foreign, and there was something in a letter addressed to her by that name, which struck her as being so strange that she did not open it, but folding it again in her brother's envelope, she waited till she could retire to peruse its contents. She continued to perform her part of hostess at the breakfast-table, and told herself it must be a begging letter from some one perhaps who had known Mr. Cresford at Verdun.

Still the letter haunted her, and she could scarcely smile at the gay jests which passed round the breakfast-table, or listen to the news and gossip contained in the correspondence of the other members of the society. The outside was so covered with postmarks and various directions that she had not remarked in what sort of hand the name was written, and she quietly took it out of the envelope just to see if it did look like a begging letter. Her former name always made her shudder, she could not tell why, and she had often reproached herself for the feeling, as an unkind and ungrateful one towards the memory of him who was gone. It was that strange instinct which had made her so quickly put this letter aside, and it was with an unaccountable trepidation that she again drew it forth to examine the handwriting. She looked and looked again, till her eyes swam. It was very like the writing which was only too familiar to her. It was,—it must be his writing,—she could not be mistaken; only it was impossible,—quite impossible. Yet it might contain his last behests, which had from some cause never been delivered before. She could not open it. She hastily concealed it, and turning deadly pale, she sat scarcely conscious of what passed around her, till the last person had been helped to his last cup of tea.

She longed to know the contents, but there came a sickness over her heart, which made her postpone the dreaded moment. At length the company rose one by one, and straggled towards the windows. She summoned all her might, and walked steadily to the door—she sought her own boudoir, and seating herself upon the sofa, she again unfolded the envelope, she again gazed on the outside—she had not yet courage to break the seal.

There was something dreadful in thus receiving the dying injunctions of one husband, one who had loved her too so passionately, in reading the ebullitions of his vehement affection, when she was the adoring wife of another. She felt as though he were about to speak to her from the grave.

She looked at the postmarks. There were upon it, in various coloured inks, Gratz, Vienna, Dresden, Madgeburg, Hamburg. No Verdun postmark! How strange! Wonder, terror conquered all other feelings—she tore open the seal—it was indeed his own handwriting!—the date, Gratz, June, 1808—What could it mean? She looked at the end—it was his own, very own name!—it was addressed to her! It begun, “My beloved wife, my own Ellen!” She could read no more; the letter dropped from her hand, and she fainted on the floor.

She was in this state when Mr. Hamilton, alarmed by her paleness at breakfast, sought her in her boudoir. He raised her from the ground, and calling her maid, soon succeeded in restoring her to herself—To herself? No! She could never again be what she had been!

She gazed around with wild and haggard eyes; then motioning the maid to leave the room, and watching with agonized fear till the double doors were both closed, she screamed rather than said,

“He is alive! he is alive! I am not your wife, Algernon! I am not yours!” and she threw herself into his arms, she clung to him, she clasped her arms around his neck with desperate energy, as if she thought thus to rivet the tie she felt was severed.

“Ellen! dearest Ellen! my own gentle Ellen, are you raving? You must be ill! What is the matter? You really frighten me!” he added, attempting to smile.

“Look there, Algernon! there it lies! I have only read the first line, and would to Heaven I had died! Oh! if I could but die now, with my head on your bosom,—your arms around me,—my eyes fixed on your’s! Dearest, dearest Algernon! I love you better than any thing else in the whole world—better, ten thousand times better, than myself! Words cannot express the thousandth part of the agonizing love I feel for you! and it is all a crime! Look there, read that!” and she pressed her hands against her eyeballs, as if to exclude light and consciousness.

This burst of passion was so unlike his retiring Ellen, whose affection, though evinced by every action of her life, implied by all she said, had still seemed frightened back into her heart, if in any moment of tenderness she was called upon to couch it into actual language, that Mr. Hamilton was lost in astonishment! In dread and wonder he took the letter in his hand—he saw the beginning—he looked at the date—he staggered to a chair, and exclaiming, “Merciful Heaven!” he too re-

mained stupified, unable to utter, and scarcely to think, or to comprehend the extent of the misfortune which had befallen them.

At length reason in some measure resumed its sway, and he suggested, "May it not be a forgery? Are you sure it is his hand?" A momentary light flashed athwart her mind; she seized the paper, and they sat down together to the perusal of that letter on which their fates so completely hung!

CHAPTER VII.

Son ilusion mis dichas
Son realidad mis penas.

It was with difficulty that Algernon and Ellen could fix their eyes upon the paper; every thing swam before them. They read in silence the following letter—with what feelings may be better imagined than described.

"MY BELOVED WIFE, MY OWN ELLEN,

"You must have been astonished at not hearing from me the result of the desperate attempt to escape from Verdun of which I informed you. It succeeded! so far, at least, as getting safe out of that horrible dungeon, disguised as one of the mourners at my own funeral, according to the plan I hinted at in my letter by Maitland, and which he promised to describe to you more fully when he reached England. I made my way across the Rhine into Germany; but I found the examinations so very strict, and the officers at the custom-houses so exceedingly suspicious, that I fancied I should be safer if I advanced farther into Germany, and tried to work my way to Hamburg.

"I was, however, almost immediately seized as a spy. My ignorance of the language was supposed to be a feint, and I was passed on, from authority to authority, from governor to governor, till I believe they began to think me a person of great importance.

"I was at length cast into prison at this place, and here I have now languished more than four years.

"I did not venture to write to you while wandering in France. All letters being opened, they might have led to my being traced

and identified; and from the moment I was in the power of the Germans, I was not allowed the use of pen and paper, lest there might be some hidden meaning in any thing I might despatch to England.

"I have now endured four years of mental anguish, such as man has seldom survived. There hangs a mist over some of the horrible years spent in this abode of misery. The wretches who drove me to desperation, treated me as a madman for resenting their cruelty, and I found myself at one time pinioned in a straight-waistcoat!

"Was it not enough to madden a cooler head than mine, to gall a calmer heart than mine, to be thus severed from the creature one adores, to know one's lovely wife, left lonely and unprotected, in the bloom of youth, amid all the temptations of this corrupt world? Oh, Ellen! I shall go mad if I think of that! But you are virtuous, Ellen!—Yes, yes—If there is virtue in woman, it is in you. And yet—Five long years of absence! Oh! you will have forgotten me. You cannot have loved me, and me alone in all these years! Oh God! if you should have loved another! My brain goes round! Be faithful to me, Ellen, as you value my reason, and your own welfare here and hereafter.

"But I am altered, fearfully altered. I am grown gray; I am twenty years older than when we parted. But I love you, Ellen, I love you with more ardour, more burning, maddening fervour, than when first I bore you in your maiden bloom from the home of your childhood.

"Write to me, my love, my wife, my own, own blessed wife! Your letter will reach me in safety if you enclose it to the new governor, who is a kind-hearted man, and has given me permission to bid you do so. He pities me. He will stand my friend. He promises to forward a petition which I am now drawing up, direct to the emperor, and a ray of hope has dawned upon me. I may yet return to you, my Ellen, and to my children—

"In life and in death,

"Your adoring husband,

"CHARLES CRESFORD."

Ellen and Algernon spoke not—moved not. They sat transfixed—they did not venture to raise their eyes to each other. Neither could entertain any doubt of the authenticity of the letter. It would be folly, worse than folly to utter what neither could believe. They who had been all the world to each other

—they whose love had been so pure that angels might have looked down from heaven and smiled upon it—what were they now? They dared not think.

At length Ellen murmured in a low and almost choked voice—

“Is he my husband, Algernon? Does the law say he is my husband?”

“Ellen, do not make me speak my own doom.”

“It is enough,” she said, “and my child is—” she paused for a moment, and after a short struggle, continued,—“is illegitimate!”

He was silent.

“Oh, merciful Heaven!” she screamed, “it cannot be true,” and she started from her seat with a wild look of hope. “It is a dream! Tell me so, Algernon, my own Algernon, my husband, tell me so. Speak to me!” and she threw herself on her knees at his feet, with clasped hands, and beseeching eyes, looking up in his face.

He lifted her from the ground, and whispered,—“We can fly, Ellen. There are other lands than this. There are countries where we may be beyond the reach of British laws, where we may have the clear blue sky of Heaven above us, where Nature pours forth her treasures to man with a bounteous hand; where we may live in freedom from the trammels of human institutions, but bound by the most sacred ties—Our own vows of eternal constancy, which surely have been registered above.”

“Live with you as your mistress! No, never, Algernon!” and she drew up her slender form to its full height, and stood the very personification of female purity and dignity. “Never, Algernon! Any thing would be more tolerable than to have you cease to respect me.”

She seemed to have regained her self-command. An almost supernatural strength for a moment inspired her.

“Now what is to be done? What is it our duty to do? But oh! the shame, the dreadful shame, of being exposed to the world as having lived for two years in sin.”

At this moment the voices of the children were heard in the passage; they flung open the door, and came bounding joyously into the room with the wild flowers they had gathered in their walk. The sight of them softened and overcame the mother,—she burst into a flood of tears.

“They are his children,” she exclaimed, “and he will take them from me. I know he will—Whichever way I turn, fresh horrors surround me!”

The poor little things, astonished at their reception, stood aghast. Mr. Hamilton hastily bade them leave their mother, told them she was not well, and hurried them out of the room.

"Ellen, dearest Ellen," he said, and approached her. He took her hand, when she started away.

"You must not touch me, Algernon! It is a crime. You say yourself I am his wife, and he is coming home. Algernon," she said, in a clear, low, sepulchral voice, speaking very slowly, "I cannot be forced to live with him again. No law can compel me to do that. Tell me the law,—let me know the truth."

"I cannot say exactly; we will inquire. Compose yourself: let us do nothing rashly. Perhaps he may never return,—perhaps he may not live to return; we do not know."

"But I am not your wife?"

"This letter may still be a forgery."

"No, no, it is too true! and I am not your wife," she repeated, with the accent of utter hopelessness.

He stood in silence; he could not say she was. He endured agony equal to hers, except that he did not feel the guilt and the remorse which were added to all her other sufferings. They remained silent till she could endure it no longer. "Algernon, no law can be so cruel as to separate us: it is impossible. After all, we were lawfully married in a church: no one forbade the banns,—no one answered the awful adjuration, 'Let him now speak, or ever after hold his peace.' Yes, we must be lawfully married. We are, are we not? Say so, my own Algernon, my husband?" and she wound herself round him, and looked up in his face with all the winning tenderness she could put into those melting eyes. "I am your wife, your wedded wife, am I not, dearest!" and she tried to smile, a sweet, sad, heart-rending smile.

This was too much for poor Hamilton. He took her in his arms, he pressed her to his bosom. "You are my own Ellen, my life, my love, the joy of my heart; without you life would be intolerable."

"I am your wife, dearest; say so,—in pity say so!"

"Yes, yes, you are! In spite of ordinances, human and divine, you are; you shall be my wife!"

"No," she said, slowly shaking her head; "No! if you speak so, then I am not your wife."

She gradually relaxed her hold, her arms dropped by her side, and she sank into a chair.

He looked on her for a few moments with a fixed gaze of

leapair, then striking his forehead he rushed out of the room, darted down the stairs, out of the house, and plunged into the most retired part of the park, where he wildly paced the ground, beating his bosom, and almost dashing his head against the trees.

When Ellen saw him hurry from her presence she gave one shriek.

"He is gone!" she cried; "gone, I have lost him for ever!"

In the mean time the maid, who had heard her master quit the apartment, came to inquire how her mistress felt after her attack of faintness. She was terrified when she saw her countenance. However, her entrance had in some measure the effect of forcing Ellen to rouse herself. She begged her maid to leave her, assuring her she was quite recovered. She rose and staggered to the window to prevent meeting the eyes of the faithful Stanmore, who had lived with her from the time she first married.

Stanmore respectfully retired, but she was so much alarmed at the state in which she found her mistress, that she went to Mrs. Allenham's room, to tell her that she feared Mrs. Hamilton was seriously indisposed.

Caroline hastened to her sister, and found her dissolved in tears, which at length flowed copiously. To all Caroline's questions she answered only by continued weeping, and sobs which succeeded each other so quickly that she could not have uttered, if she had wished to do so.

The fresh air had in some measure restored Mr. Hamilton. He had recovered the powers of his mind. He had reflected that many unforeseen accidents might still prevent the return of Mr. Cresford; that the idea of his being alive, if once noised abroad, would throw a shade over their future lives, even should it eventually prove an unfounded notion. He persuaded himself once more it might be a trick for the purpose of extorting money upon the supposition that he would attempt to bribe the first husband to silence. He was not acquainted with Mr. Cresford's handwriting, and his hopes revived. At all events, the report once circulated could not be crushed, and he hastened back to the house, if possible, to calm Ellen, and to bind her to secrecy.

He entered her boudoir just as Mrs. Allenham was trying to extract from her the cause of her distress, when Ellen, springing from her seat, rushed into Algernon's arms, exclaiming,—

"You are not gone for ever. Thank God, I see you again!"

Mrs. Allenham looked on in surprise. Could it be that Ellen and her husband had quarrelled? They whose conjugal felicity had become almost proverbial? Such scenes never occurred between herself and Mr. Allenham! Ellen was as good-tempered as she was; and though Mr. Hamilton was a more high-flown, romantic sort of man than Mr. Allenham—not so religious perhaps—not so much in the habit of regulating his feelings by the exact measure of duty, still he was an excellent man, and a good-tempered man. What could it all mean?

However, she felt she could be of little service, and that as Ellen had some one with her who would take care of her should she again feel unwell, she left them together.

"Compose yourself, dearest Ellen," Mr. Hamilton said, in a soothing tone; "I have much to say, and you must listen attentively to my arguments."

"Any thing to hear your voice—to still look upon you," and she seated herself opposite to him, and fixed her eyes upon him, as if she would drink in every word which fell from his lips, and indelibly fix in her mind every lineament of that face which she was soon no more to see.

"Listen to me. There is a possibility that this letter may not be authentic."

She shook her head sorrowfully. He continued,

"All things are possible. Then there is more than a possibility, that if alive, he whose name I cannot bring myself to speak may never reach England. His health seems to be impaired,—he may sink under his sufferings. If he should never return, why should we have wilfully proclaimed to the world our disgrace,—for disgrace it will be in the eyes of the world, though no guilt is ours?"

"But we should be guilty now, knowing what we do know."

"We are not quite sure: let us wait for confirmation before we breathe one word concerning this letter to any living being. Remember, that if we were to learn the next day that the poor prisoner had fallen a victim to his miseries, that he was at rest, though we might then be lawfully united, our child, our innocent child, would, by our own imprudence, be proved illegitimate."

Ellen's countenance changed: she listened with a persuaded air. Mr. Hamilton resumed,

"We must, for her sake, hide for the present all we feel; we

must, if possible, assume a calm exterior, and trust to Providence for the issue."

"I wish I knew what was right. And yet what you tell me must be so. But I cannot,—I cannot show my face to-day; I am sure if I did, I should betray all." After a pause, she added, "I will tell you what you must do, Algernon, though it breaks my heart to say so;—you must either allow me to pay my father a visit, or you must yourself go away for a time,—make a tour,—visit the lakes,—go to Scotland. We must not live together till this dreadful mystery is cleared up, till our fate is ascertained one way or another."

"What! leave the company we have staying in the house? Impossible, without exciting such observations!"

"They will be gone in three days, and then—then—Yes, it is better to be miserable only, than to be miserable and guilty also!"

"If it is your wish, Ellen, I will leave you. It is best, I should be the one to go: if you were to quit this roof it would feel more like a real and final separation."

"My fainting fit will be an excuse for my not appearing to-day. Indeed I do feel so ill I could not bear my part in society. To-morrow I will try to do as you wish. I will strive, for the sake of my poor little Agnes."

The whole of that day was spent by the wretched Ellen in a state of stupefaction. The misfortune which had befallen her was too great and too overwhelming to be completely comprehended. Her overstrained nerves could bear no more, and she sat in a state of comparative calmness. She expressed no wish to see her children, no desire for any thing, and Mrs. Allenham bade the maid remain in the adjoining apartment.

She returned to the company herself, and informed them of her sister's sudden indisposition. She tried with all the tact of which she was mistress, to extract from Lady Coverdale whether Mr. Hamilton had ever been subject to starts of temper, but she elicited nothing from her but a recapitulation of his virtues.

CHAPTER VIII.

We that did nothing study but the way
To love each other, with which thoughts the day
Rose with delight to us, and with them set,
Must learn the cruel art how to forget.

—Like turtle-doves

Dislodged from their haunts, we must in tears
Unwind a love knit up in many years.
Now turn we each from each—so fare our hearts,
As the divorced soul from its body parts.

THE SURRENDER.

MR. HAMILTON had half-succeeded in persuading himself the whole thing was a cunning forgery. The story seemed so improbable. No letter had ever arrived from Cresford—no Maitland had ever brought any intelligence of this attempt to escape. Colonel Eversham had seen him carried to the grave—the funeral had taken place at night, by Mr. Cresford's dying request, he said. How unlikely, whatever might subsequently have been the difficulties of his situation, that, if alive, he should really have allowed so much time to elapse without writing to the wife with whom he was so madly in love! These reflections all presented themselves to his mind, and by dinner-time he was able to take his accustomed seat, and to do the honours of his table with tolerable self-possession.

Towards evening Mrs. Allenham was alarmed by a recurrence of Ellen's faintness: it was immediately after her children had been brought in to wish her good-night.

Mrs. Allenham was urgent that a physician should be sent for. Ellen appeared to revive, and to express her vehement desire that no one should be summoned. She only wished that her maid should sleep on a sofa in her room, in case she should be worse in the night. Mrs. Allenham thought Mr. Hamilton rather remiss in not sending for medical advice.

"Mr. Allenham," she thought, "though he does not make such a fuss about his love for me, would never let me be as ill as Ellen is without sending for all the doctors in the neighbourhood; but different men have different ways, and one must take people as one finds them."

One thing, however, she resolved upon, that if Ellen was not better the next morning she would speak her mind openly

to Mr. Hamilton, and insist on his having the very best advice.

Ellen was no sooner in her bed than she dropped into a profound slumber, from which she awoke early the next morning, refreshed in body, and with only a vague recollection of the tremendous change which had taken place in her fate. By degrees, her actual situation opened upon her.

How dreadful is the waking from a real sound sleep of forgetfulness, after any severe misfortune has befallen us! The temporary oblivion of our sorrows scarcely compensates for the agony of recollection.

She was, however, aware of the necessity of concealing what she felt, if she wished to preserve the illegitimacy of her child from becoming public, while there was yet a hope of its remaining unknown. She passed some time in humble prayer, imploring guidance from above, judgment to know what was right, and strength to execute it.

She rose from prayer in a calmer frame of mind—she felt herself fortified for the task before her—she thought that if Algernon left her at Belhanger alone, there could be no crime in delaying the promulgation of the dreadful secret, for the chance of saving herself and her child from unmerited disgrace.

She went down to breakfast, and she made an attempt to smile in return to the salutations and inquiries of her friends. She was in the act of assuring them she was quite well, when Mr. Hamilton entered the apartment. She started as she heard his well-known turn of the lock, she faltered in her speech as he entered, her paleness was replaced by a vivid glow, which overspread her face, but she turned not her eyes upon him; she studiously avoided meeting his; the first sound of his voice thrilled through her very being.

She took her station at the breakfast-table, upon the same spot where yesterday she had received that fatal intelligence which had so completely broken up her happiness. She took her station as mistress of the mansion to which she had no longer any right. She felt she was an impostor.

Mr. Hamilton, who had, the preceding day, buoyed himself up with something more of hope than she had done, had passed a night of anxious restlessness. Sleep had not for one moment weighed down his eyelids; and when at length Ellen ventured, almost by stealth, to take one look at that beloved countenance, her heart was pierced to see it so wan, so haggard.

Their object was to avoid exciting remark. A plan was proposed, and acceded to, of driving to see a fine castle in the
Vol. I.—E

neighbourhood, in which was a collection of pictures. Ellen accompanied the ladies in an open carriage, and Mr. Hamilton took the gentlemen across the country, on horseback.

While others were engaged in admiring some of the master-pieces of art, Ellen found herself near Mr. Hamilton.

"Algernon, you look very ill," she said: "it breaks my heart to see you!"

"Can it be otherwise, Ellen? Even you can scarcely know the tortures I endure."

"We must not speak to each other. I shall lose the self-command I have so struggled to obtain. But I have behaved well, Algernon? I have conducted myself according to your wishes?"

"Yes! yes! May God bless you, dearest and best! I cannot trust myself to say another word."

He hastened away, and went to the stables, as though to see for the horses and the barouche. Ellen busied herself in examining a picture, of which she did not see one form, and drove back her bursting tears, and stilled the tumult of her soul.

On their way home, Lady Coverdale was eloquent on the beauties of this part of the world, on the charms of Belhanger, and discussed with much interest the plan for the flower-garden which Ellen was making along the terrace in front of the house.

"When your shrubs have grown, and the creepers cover that bowered walk to the left, it will be quite beautiful. Are you not always very impatient at the slow growth of plants? One has to wait so long before one sees any result produced. I think it is a great objection to gardening. However, you are very young, and you may look forward to many years of enjoying your improvements."

These simple words shot like daggers through Ellen's heart. She could not reply, and notwithstanding all her efforts to appear at her ease, the conversation flagged. Caroline had seen Ellen speak in a low voice to Mr. Hamilton, while others were engaged with the paintings; she had seen him suddenly leave the room, and perceiving how oppressed Ellen's spirits were, became thoroughly convinced some serious disagreement had occurred.

"Well," she thought, "I suppose it will all come right again. Everybody cannot go on so smoothly as dear Mr. Allenham and I do!"

When they returned from their excursion, Ellen retired to her room. She had not the heart, as usual, to repair to the nursery, or the school-room. The sight of her two elder children harrowed her soul, from the fear that she possessed

them only for a time, that they would be torn from her, just when their opening intelligence, their amiable dispositions had superadded to the instinctive love of a mother, the affection produced by their own good qualities. The sight of her little girl was scarcely less agonizing, from the conviction that she must soon be a nameless outcast!

She had again recourse to prayer, and she again rose from her devotions strengthened and resigned.

At that moment a gentle tap at the door was heard, and Algernon entered.

"I must see you, I must speak to you, Ellen! Human nature cannot endure this continued state of effort. Let us unbend for a few short moments. Tell me you love me, and that, let our fate be what it may, your heart, your whole heart, is mine."

"Oh, Algernon! I have just been praying for strength and resignation, and I thought I had obtained my prayer. Do not speak to me in those tender tones. They melt away my whole soul, and I will, I will be firm. I must no longer allow myself to use such expressions; but I cannot even try not to feel all, and more than I ever felt before. Spare my weakness, Algernon, and remember that dearly as I prize your love, I prize your good opinion still more. That is the one thought which enables me to exist, I believe."

He looked on her with admiration, almost amounting to awe.

"My good opinion! You are as much superior to me, or to any other living being, as the angels of heaven are to the common run of mortals. I adore you, I venerate you, as one of them." He knelt at her feet. "Speak, and I will obey you. I place myself under your guidance. I will regulate my actions by what you deem calculated to ensure your own peace of mind. I will prove to you that I can equal you at least in self-devotion; though my heart may break, I will not yield to you in that!"

"Get up, Algernon. Do not kneel at my feet. I cannot bear to hear you speak in such a manner. These scenes must not recur. We only agonize each other, and render ourselves unfit for our task. Leave me, dearest; leave me to compose myself!"

"You bid me leave you, and I will do so. But will you not give me your hand? That dear hand which, after all, was pledged to me at the altar!" He took her unresisting hand. "It was I who placed that ring upon your finger, Ellen; you then swore to me eternal fidelity, you swore to love me 'till

death us did part.' Can any thing cancel that vow?" And he drew her gently towards him.

"O God! nothing, nothing!" She dashed his hand from her, and rushed to the opposite corner of the room. She glared wildly upon him.—"Nothing, nothing can cancel that first dreadful vow! Oh! do not remind me of those words. It was then the vision came over me! He, who you tell me is my husband, seemed to rise up between us, Algernon! It was a forewarning of what was to happen! I ought to have obeyed the warning—I should have stopped before"—her voice faltered, but she continued in a tone of unutterable sweetness—"before those words made me the happiest woman in the whole world!" She hid her face with her hands, and burst into tears.

"Bless you for what you have just said, my own Ellen!"

"Do not call me your own Ellen; I am not—can never be! In mercy leave me—this agony is not to be endured!"

Slowly and reluctantly he withdrew: he stood for a few moments at the door, and then he closed it, and she remained alone.

She had prayed for strength, and she found it. She did not weep, but meekly sat, patient and uncomplaining. The hour for dressing arrived, and she mechanically proceeded with her toilet. Her maid had prepared the dress, the ornaments she thought she would wear. Mechanically she sat before the looking-glass, mechanically she arranged her ringlets round her face: she placed in her hair the ornamental comb her maid presented to her, fastened her ear-rings, held out her arm to have her bracelets clasped, and, when she was dressed, wondered at herself for having tricked herself out in all these gewgaws.

"How strange," she thought, "that I should have been able thus to deck this wretched form!" But such is the force of habit: it does not come into anybody's head to leave off the feathers, the diamonds, the flowers with which they are in the habit of adorning themselves, though the heart beneath may be breaking—and yet it seems a mockery!

Before dinner Lady Coverdale begged that the children might be sent for, and little Agnes appeared in a beautiful cap which Miss Coverdale had embroidered for her. The beauty of the child's eyes was discussed.

"If Agnes grows up according to this promise, Mrs. Hamilton"—(Ellen started at the name)—"you will have a pleasant task in acting as her chaperon."

Ellen almost sank at the prospect which was thus brought before her. She could not answer, but, hastily turning away, stirred the fire with great energy, at the same time exclaiming how hot it was.

They went to dinner; she was seated at the head of the table, opposite to Mr. Hamilton. She felt a sort of melancholy pleasure in being, as it were, forced to appear as his wife; but never did two such bursting hearts pass calmly through an evening of society.

Another day succeeded, and it was spent in the same struggle. On the third the Coverdales departed, thinking that, for so happy a couple, they were the most fashionably cool they had ever seen; the Allenhams, fearing that Mr. Hamilton, charming as he was, must have an odd corner of temper, for, as to Ellen, they knew her too well to imagine for a moment that she could be in fault.

They all drove from the door, and the wretched couple were left alone with their love and their misery.

"And now *you* must leave me, Algernon: we must not remain here alone, and I even doubt whether I ought to remain under your roof."

"Oh, Ellen! one would think you wished to believe we were severed, for ever severed! There is still hope."

"None for me! I know that handwriting too well."

"Must I go to-day?"

"To-day, if you value my peace, and the little remnant of honour I may yet hope to preserve."

"This is hard, this is cruel; but you shall have an approving conscience, my own Ellen; and if your conscience will be easier when I am gone, I will not linger: I will order every thing for my journey, and I will go at dusk to-night. Till then, you will let me be with you; till then, I may look on your face—I may listen to your voice—I may breathe the same air with you!"

He flew to order his departure, and in another instant was by her side.

There was a melancholy satisfaction in being together, and yet, when they were so, they could not speak: what could they say that was not fraught with wretchedness?"

"I must see our children, Ellen."

He had been in the habit of calling all the children "*our*;" but the little word which from the force of habit escaped him, struck daggers to the hearts of both. The two elder were his children who might soon be at home to claim them.

They all three came, and poor Hamilton devoured them with kisses. The little Agnes was just old enough to know him, and to hold out her arms to him with a smile of joy. They could neither of them endure this long; they could not talk to the children—they could not play with them—they could not listen to their prattle, and they were soon sent away.

Strange to say, these last few hours, whose flight they so much dreaded, hung heavy. They wished to arrest the course of time, and yet they knew not how to pass it. They strolled into the garden; every thing there spoke of hope and promise; every thing within their own bosoms boded unheard-of wretchedness.

They had several times paced in silence round the sheltered parterre, when Ellen turned deadly pale, and stopped for a few moments.

"You must lean on me, Ellen! You must take my arm."

Her feebleness compelled her to do so, and once more he had the happiness of feeling that lovely form rest on him for support.

Neither spoke again. Both hearts were too full for utterance. In silence they bent their course homeward. They again returned to the drawing-room. They once more sat down there together. They could not bring themselves to quit each other for a moment,—to lose one instant of these few precious hours; and yet to each the presence of the other was oppressive. This state of misery and *gêne* was worse than that occasioned by the presence of others.

They could not, at such a moment, speak on indifferent subjects, and if they alluded to their own situation, it must lead to passionate bursts of feeling, which she considered as criminal, and which he also dreaded for her sake.

At length the hour of departure came. The carriage was announced—and he went up stairs alone once more to give his parting blessing to the children. He returned to her.

"I think we may correspond," she said, "there can be nothing wrong in that till our fate is quite decided."

"Oh yes, yes; you must write every day," he replied. "I shall find out some retired spot in Wales, and I shall remain there in utter seclusion till your mind is made easy by hearing no more. In three months you will conclude it was only a forgery."

She shook her head. "I know the writing."

"In six months? In a year you will—name some time—set some term to my banishment!"

"We will write—I am not capable of knowing or understanding what is right in your presence. You must leave me, Algernon, or I think I shall die now at your feet!"

"And are we to part thus?"

She stood like a marble statue, as cold, as pale, as motionless.

"Are we to part thus? Impossible!" and he snatched her to his bosom, and imprinted on her lips one kiss of deep, fervent, unalterable love.

He tore himself away, and plunging into the carriage, in a few moments was borne far from the scene of all his happiness.

When she heard the sound of the wheels, she made a desperate rush to the window, and remained fixed there to listen for their sound, and to fancy she still heard it long after it was possible to do so.

CHAPTER IX.

From our own paths, our love's attesting bowers,

I am not gone,

In the deep hush of midnight's whispering hours

Thou art not lone!

Not lone when by the haunted stream thou weepest,

That stream whose tone

Murmurs of thoughts the holiest and the deepest

We two have known.

MRS. HEMANS.

HE was gone—quite gone—and slowly and wearily she dragged herself back to the sofa, and gave free vent to all the agony which had been eating away her very being.

She was thus drowned in tears when the footman entered the room, upon some pretence of closing the shutters or of making up the fire. The servants could not but perceive that something unusual was going on, and their curiosity was excited by the mysterious looks of their master and mistress, and by the sudden departure of the former. Ellen, to avoid the inquiring gaze of the footman, hastily retired to her boudoir, whither she had no sooner retreated than her anxious maid peeped in to see if she might want any thing.

Pleading a violent headache, she bade her say she should not require any dinner, and assured her that nothing but entire

quiet could relieve the pain—under which she was suffering. The faithful creature would prescribe all the nostrums that ever were invented for headaches, and poor Ellen thought he never should be allowed to weep in peace. At length he was relieved from the troublesome attentions both of the inquisitive and of the kind-hearted, and was left to her own sad thoughts.

She accused herself of not having sufficiently valued the one last morning she had passed with him. She remembered a thousand things she meant to say—a thousand things she ought to have said. She thought she had been cold, she thought she had been unkind, and yet she reproached herself for having allowed him to take that one farewell kiss, for she felt and knew she was not his wife. She could not deceive herself into a momentary belief that the letter was an imposture. She knew that her lawful husband was alive, and that every feeling of her soul was therefore criminal. Still, though she scarcely indulged a hope of ever being reunited to Algernon, she had not the courage to declare the truth. She wished, if possible, to preserve her reputation, and her child's position in the world.

She now had leisure to reflect upon the line of conduct it behooved her to adopt, and she came to the conclusion, that, provided she received no further communication from Mr. Cresford, and that there seemed no fear of open exposure, the only mode of preserving her fair name, and her virtue at the same time, was to induce Mr. Hamilton to consent to an amicable separation on the score of incompatibility of temper.

This was her best hope! How dreadful the other alternative! To be claimed by the indignant Cresford, to be held up to the eyes of the world as a base culprit, guilty of the crime of bigamy! It was almost too degrading to contemplate.

Some days had now elapsed; she had every morning received the letters with a sickening dread which almost paralyzed her. With fear and horror she had hastily turned over the exterior of every letter, and with inexpressible relief she had found none that bore the dreaded foreign postmark. Each morning brought a long epistle from Algernon, written in the spirit of the highest, purest, most devoted affection.

These were some balm to her heart. These were treasured up and perused over and over again. But she was an altered creature—all around wondered at the change. The children found that mamma could only kiss them and weep over them, and they became thoughtful and subdued in her

presence. The poor people wondered their bounteous lady no longer came among them. She could not do so. She dreaded the eyes of her fellow-creatures—their very blessings were painful to her—she felt as if she had obtained them under false pretences. All that had given her pleasure in this lovely place, this delightful country, now only filled her with regret, when she thought that the next day might find her an exile from this paradise. Every walk, every tree, every view, every spot she visited, reminded her of him whom she no longer ventured to call husband, and with whom she had no hope of ever seeing them again.

Two or three weeks had now slowly dragged their weary length away, and no fresh intelligence had arrived. It was nearly a month since she had received the first, and she almost began to think he found it impossible to make his escape. The friendly governor might be removed. The mental aberration might, from over-excitement, have returned. She felt wicked in, for a moment, anticipating such a circumstance with any thing approaching to satisfaction; and yet the horror of another, and still more appalling, solution of the difficulty, that he had succeeded in his petition, and that he was on his way home, filled her with dismay which almost bewildered her senses.

* One morning when she, as usual, received with trembling hands the packet of letters, she perceived one from her brother with an enclosure. With dizzy eyes she tore open the cover, and within found another, with the same dreaded postmark of Gratz. Despair gave her courage to open it. It was indeed from Cresford, and he there told her the governor had proved his kindest friend; that the emperor had listened favourably to his petition, and that he had every prospect of being able to commence his journey to England in a few days,—that as the time approached he felt ten thousand fears pass through his bosom. How much might have happened since he left his home. His Ellen, to whom he was now writing in the fulness of his heart, might possibly be gathered to the dead. His children! were they still in existence? "Oh, my dearest wife," he continued, "you can form no conception of the distracted and confused state of my mind when I think of the changes that may have taken place among you. Of one thing I believe I may rest assured, though my own wayward disposition has sometimes been prone to unreasonable bursts of—jealousy, shall I say?—no, rather sensitiveness,—for you will do me the justice to confess I never was jealous of any individual,—of one thing I may rest assured, that I shall find you pure, true, and virtuous

"I left you. The knowledge of your virtue has been my only consolation,—that conviction alone has supported me through all my misfortunes. In one short month I shall be at home, my Ellen, never, never again to part from you."

This confirmation of what she most dreaded came upon her with almost as great a shock as the first announcement of her misery. Yet she felt ungrateful at making such a return for all the affection expressed by Cresford, affection which had stood the test of time, which had been his guiding principle in absence, imprisonment, even in madness.

The next moment she fancied that by such emotions she wronged Algernon, her own adored Algernon, who was forever torn from her, and doomed to sufferings equal to her own.

In another month Cresford said he should be at home. The time had nearly elapsed: he might arrive any day. There was not a moment to be lost!

In her distraction she almost forgot to open the daily letter of Mr. Hamilton. It breathed of hope! He had always been more sanguine than herself, and in this he pleaded strongly to be allowed to return. He argued that the protracted silence almost proved, beyond a doubt, that the whole had been a false alarm.

She placed the dear letter next her heart, and, hastily gathering together the rest of her correspondence, which had been cast aside, was preparing to arrange all things for her instant departure, when her attention was arrested by a second epistle from her brother Henry. She knew the worst; she had no more to fear, and she perused it with a desperate calmness.

Henry began by saying that he, and all the other partners, had been much distressed by a communication they had received of so strange a character that he scarcely liked to disturb her mind by reporting it; that yet, as he had forwarded to her by the same post a letter which appeared to come from the same quarter as the one they had received, and as, if he mislook not, he had some time ago sent her another with a similar direction and postmark, perhaps she might be prepared for what he was going to tell her.

The fact was they had received a letter purporting to come from Mr. Cresford, and full of incomprehensible allusions to an escape from Verdun, and to a mock-funeral; that they scarcely knew whether to consider it a forgery or not; that he grieved to say those who were most conversant with his handwriting seemed most persuaded of its authenticity; that they were all in the

greatest perplexity, but, upon the whole, agreed it was best to keep the circumstance a secret for the present.

He dreaded to think what her feelings must be; that for himself, he was firmly convinced it was an imposture from first to last,—that he remembered how circumstantial had been Colonel Eversham's account of the funeral of poor Cresford, performed by torch-light, according to his own particular request, and attended by Colonel Eversham himself, by Captain Morton, and several more of the *détenus* who were on parole. "And do you not remember his dwelling upon the awful circumstance, that in one short week from the time Captain Morton had acted as chief mourner at Cresford's interment, he was himself committed to the grave? Do not worry yourself, therefore, my dearest sister. Depend upon it, it is a trick, with the view of extorting money; but I thought it would not be right to leave you in ignorance of the unpleasant doubt.

"I should have been myself the bearer of this strange dispatch, but I am unavoidably detained in town to-day by business. I will be with you soon after you receive this."

"It is all true," she thought to herself, "and it is all known. It must now be published abroad; there is no escape;" and she looked wildly around her. This was no moment for deliberation or indecision.

She commanded post-horses to be instantly sent for; she summoned her maid; she desired the nurses, the children, the *bonnes*, to prepare instantly for a sudden journey, and she sat down to write the appalling news to Algernon, to dash all the hopes which he had fostered, to doom him also to a future as blank and cheerless as her own.

She began, "I have scarcely the power to write what I am now compelled to impart to you. In a few more hours I shall have left this beloved home; in a few more hours I shall be a outcast from this blessed place, where I have lived as you most happy, and your honoured wife. Thank you, Algernon for the unutterable happiness I have for two years enjoyed thank you for all your love, all your tenderness.

"I am going to my father. Poor man! he little knows the shame and misery which await the decline of his life; he who so valued the opinion of the world! Oh, Algernon, I am doomed to bring a curse on all who are connected with me! I shall bring his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave; I have cast a blight over the dignified and prosperous career which awaited you; I have been the bane of that unhappy man whose ungodly, ill-fated love for me led him to practise the deceit which

has worked us all so much woe. My name will be a lasting disgrace to my children,—all of them !

“Algernon ! when I think of you, my heart is near breaking ; when I think of your return to your desolate home, when I know how you will miss me,—for I judge too well from my own what your feelings will be,—when I think how you will miss the children, too ! Heavens, I have just ordered the nurse to prepare herself and Agnes for our sad journey !—But what right have I to do so ? She is your child, Algernon, and shall I deprive you of that one consolation ? Shall I deprive her of an honourable station to drag her with me into shame and degradation ? No ! my wretchedness can scarcely know increase, and you shall be greeted on your return by her smiles, her outstretched arms, her lovely attempts to prattle. I leave you that precious legacy. She will remind you of her who loves you still with tenfold fervour, though it is now a crime to do so. . .

“There is a sort of pleasure in sacrificing something to you : you shall keep her and cherish her. I expect my brother every moment : he and the other members of the house have likewise received communications from Gratz. I cannot add another word—I cannot sign myself,—for, oh ! what name do I now bear ?”

She hastily sealed her letter, and, without giving herself time to retract, she flew up stairs, and told the nurse that she and Agnes were to remain at Belhanger—that only George and Caroline were to accompany her. The nurse was astonished at the sudden change ; but her mistress looked so ghastly and so wild, she did not venture any question or any remark. Ellen snatched her child to her heart—kissed it with such vehemence that the terrified creature screamed—then, almost thrusting it again into the nurse’s arms, she rushed out of the room, not daring to trust herself another moment in its sight.

She now hastened into her own apartments, and, without allowing herself time for tender emotions or reminiscences, she began to pack up her papers, her letters, a few favourite books of devotion, some of the many tokens of affection she had received from Algernon, and above all, his picture—that picture which she gazed upon every day, ten times every day, during his absence.

While thus employed, she saw her maid arranging her diamonds, and other jewels, for the journey.

“Do not put up those,” she said, in a clear, calm voice ; “they must be left here.”

“Dear ma’am, we always take them with us wherever we

go; I always think they are safest when they are under my own eye."

"They must remain, Stanmore," answered Ellen, almost sternly.

"Just as you please, ma'am, certainly," replied the abigail, whose feelings on the subject of the diamonds were so acute that she could not look with indifference upon any thing that concerned them, although she saw something had certainly happened which greatly discomposed her mistress, and was really tenderly attached to her.

"Would you please to leave all the trinkets, ma'am?" she added, with rather a mortified, injured accent.

"No, Stanmore; I must take these rings, these bracelets, all these things—they were all given to me by dear friends."

"I am sure, ma'am, I should have thought you might have wished what Mr. Hamilton had given you to go along with us."

"Say no more, Stanmore; I cannot bear it.—Only make haste,—all possible haste!—I must go to my father to-day."

"Dear me! I beg your pardon, ma'am; but is Captain Wareham ill?"

"No—yes—I am not sure—I believe he is pretty well."

Ellen left the room, having secured the few articles she much valued; and having told Stanmore to carry the diamonds to the housekeeper, and bid her give them to Mr. Hamilton when he returned.

"How strange!" said Mrs. Stanmore to herself. "Master and mistress must have quarrelled desperately, somehow or another. And to think how loving they did seem to be till just at last! Well, they say such violent love is too hot to hold. I shall think of that when next Mr. Perkins says a civil word to me, and give him a civil word in return, for all he is not the man of my heart; for it's my belief all the love should be on the man's side. How well my poor mistress and Mr. Cresford went on, though he was so queer; and now she has got a husband she loves, this is the end of it all! Ah! it does not do to make too much of the men. If one has a man one does not care for, one has one's wits about one, to know how to manage him."

While Mrs. Stanmore was making these sage reflections (in which there is much deserving attention from the young and inexperienced), Ellen, who could not sit still, and who was afraid to trust herself with her child, wandered like an unquiet spirit about the house, longing to visit every well-known room, and to bid each a sad adieu; but she met servants in every

direction carrying trunks and imperials in all the bustle of departure.

She took refuge in her boudoir, from which the few things she meant to carry with her were already removed. She looked round in silence and in calmness. There was not an object which did not remind her of some act of kindness of Algernon's. A tap at the door startled her from the abstraction in which she stood.

Mrs. Topham, the stately housekeeper, made her appearance.

"If you please, ma'am, I come for orders during your absence. If you thought, ma'am, you should be away some little time, the furniture in the chintz-room wants washing sadly, and perhaps, ma'am, it would be a good opportunity to get it calendered."

"Do just as you please, Mrs. Topham. I cannot attend to those things at this moment."

"Certainly, ma'am, I would not trouble you for the world; but Miss Mason wished to know whether you would have them go on with master's neckcloths, or whether you wished the table-linen to be put in hand immediately at the school."

"Oh yes, Mrs. Topham."

"What, the table-linen? or the neckcloths, did you mean ma'am?"

"Either: it matters little! Mr. Hamilton will be at home in a few days, and he will tell you. I am very ill, Mrs. Topham. I cannot—I cannot answer you." And tears for the first time that morning flowed from her eyes.

There is nothing so strange as the causes which open the floodgates of wo. The vexation of being troubled with these trifles, and the feeling that she had no longer a right to regulate them, that it would no longer be her care to see to all these little household details, melted her to tears, when all the deep and overwhelming bearings of the case had not produced an inclination to weep.

Mrs. Topham departed, surprised, grieved, and a little offended.

"She never knew her mistress in such a way before. She had always behaved so considerate to her, and spoken in such a kind and feeling way, she was sure there was something wrong, and that her mistress had something upon her mind."

Ellen now thought she would once more see his study. She should there be safe from intrusion, and she would look at every thing, and fix it so firmly in her memory, that it should

serve as a sort of picture to which her mind's eye might at any time recur. She marked every chair and table, the very pattern of the cornice, the mouldings on the book-cases, the carving of the chimney-piece. She touched all the papers, the parliamentary reports which crowded the table, and which might have been touched by him.

At this moment a chaise drove up to the door, and her brother Henry leaped out of it. In another moment Ellen was in his arms, and clinging to him in the full abandonment of long pent-up sorrow, which at length is allowed free vent. There was a degree of relief in the presence of one to whom she might unburthen her whole soul, from whom she need have no secrets, and with whom she need be under no restraint.

This weakness, however, was not of long duration. She quickly shook it off, and rousing herself, she uttered in a firm though hurrying manner:

"We must be gone directly, Henry. You will take me to my father's; you will go with me, dear brother, will you not?"

"Where is Hamilton?" he answered.

"He has not been here since I received the first packet you enclosed me. We parted then!" She pressed her hand for a moment tightly upon her eyeballs.

"Do you then consider the case so hopeless, my poor dear sister?"

"Alas! I have from the very first, although he would scarcely believe me."

"Oh, dreadful! dreadful! What is to be done?"

"I must go to my father, and I must leave the rest to Providence. I have not wittingly done wrong, so I hope God will assist me to bear that with which it is his pleasure to visit me!"

"My poor, poor Ellen!"

"Do not pity me, Henry!" I have prayed for strength, and hitherto I have been mercifully supported. Do not pity me, or I shall not be able to go through what must be done this day."

"Ellen! By Heavens, you are the most high-minded, courageous, and noble, as well as the gentlest and loveliest creature I ever saw! Whatever the result may be, you are certainly doing what is right. I am ready to accompany you."

"Every thing is prepared, Henry. I have only one task left, that of bidding adieu to my baby—my little Agnes!"

"Do you leave her behind you?"

"I cannot rob Algernon of that which will remind him of me, and yet give him pleasure, instead of pain. Neither will

I heap more shame and disgrace on my child's head than is unavoidable."

Ellen left him, and with a slow and heavy step she for the last time mounted the oak staircase. She went to the nursery, and solemnly taking the child away, she carried it into the room which was her own. Bolting all the doors, she knelt as she held the infant in her arms, and offered up for it prayers as fervent and as pure as ever ascended to the throne of grace. Then kissing its eyes, its forehead, its lips.

"May the God of mercy bless thee, my babe! may he bless thee with virtue, principle, rectitude: whatever may be thy fate in this world, may he bring thee to that place where the wicked cease from troubling, where the weary are at rest!"

She rose from her knees, and carried the child back to the nurse. In a calm and steady voice, she bade her, as she valued her peace of mind here and hereafter, to do her duty by the infant; and begging God to bless them both, she steadily went down the stairs, and without looking to the right or to the left, passed through the hall. When she reached the door, she paused, and turning round, she saw the servants, who, half-wonder, half-sympathy, had collected at the different doors, and were pressing forward. She tried to speak—her voice failed her; she made another effort, and at length uttered,

"You have all done your duties by me, and may God reward you for it!"

A burst of tears and sobs, they scarcely themselves knew wherefore, was all the answer they could make.

Henry supported her into the carriage. Her elder children and their attendants entered the other, and she was rapidly conveyed from a spot where she had endured the two extremes of mortal bliss and mortal wo.

CHAPTER X.

En songe, souhaid, et pensée,
 Vous voye chacun jour de sepmaine
 Combien qu'estes de moi loingtaine
 Belle très loyaument amée.

Du tout vous ay m'amour donnée ;
 Vous en pavez être certaine,
 Ma seule dame souveraine,
 De mon las cœur moult désirée
 En songe, souhaid, et pensée.

CHARLES DUC D'ORLEANS, A. D. 1446.

How did poor Hamilton meanwhile pass the time of his weary exile? It would have been wretchedness to him to have been recognised, to have been obliged to answer the usual inquiries after his wife and children, with which a married man is invariably greeted; to endure all the common courtesies of life. Yet his acquaintance was so general, his name so well known, from having on many occasions borne a prominent part in politics, and from having lived much in the world, that he could scarcely find a spot where he would not be exposed to them.

He therefore, under an assumed name, retired to the most desolate fishing village he could find in the neighbourhood of M——, and passed his days wandering upon the shore, and mixing with none but the fishers, who plied their dangerous trade upon the wild Welsh coast.

Every morning he walked into the town, and claimed his letters at the post-office, then hurried to the shore, there to feast upon the lines traced by his beloved Ellen's hand. The enthusiastic turn of mind, which we at first described him as possessing, enabled him, better perhaps than another man, to endure the life of abnegation of self which he here led. His passion was of so pure, so refined a character, that in sober truth, he had rather sit alone on a sea-girt rock, and think of her whom he worshipped with so holy a love, than be in the society of any other living being, however lovely, however fascinating.

Weeks however elapsed, and even his highly-wrought nature was beginning to tire of this protracted uncertainty. He formed a thousand desperate plans; he nearly convinced himself

that they were both sacrificing their happiness to a frivolous punctilio; that Mr. Cresford never would return—that if he did, still in the eye of Heaven she was his, not Cresford's wife, and that there would be no guilt in their flying to the uttermost parts of the earth, and there existing for each other alone.

But although he might think such thoughts, he never ventured to commit them to paper when writing to her. He never again proposed their living together, if their union was not sanctioned by the laws. There was a spotless lofty purity about her that he dared not outrage by word or look. He knew also, that even supposing he should succeed in persuading her to fly with him, still, that with her disposition, her religious principles, she could never find happiness in his devotion, if remorse was an inmate of her bosom. He had courage to endure all ills, rather than to meet her reproachful eye;—to feel he had caused that innocent heart to know the pangs of a wounded conscience;—to feel that her religion, which was now her only source of consolation, had, through his means, been converted into a source of terror. The romantic adventures and feelings of his own early life, did not lead to his experiencing the same orthodox scruples himself, but the enthusiastic devotedness of his disposition made him respect them, even while he thought them overstrained.

His despair, therefore, when he received Ellen's last communication, knew no bounds. It destroyed his only hope. He paced the shore. It was a stormy morning, as if in accordance with his feelings: the sea-gull, with its wide-spread wings, gleaming white against the lead-coloured clouds, screamed as it passed over his head. The surf was wildly beating against the beach. The fisher vessels which had been out all night, were striving to regain the land before the threatening storm burst upon them. He looked upon the little boats as they neared the shore with an emotion of envy.—“Perhaps,” he thought, “perhaps the next few waves may swallow up the brave fellows who are there exerting themselves to preserve life. They know not for what a miserable possession they are struggling. They know not what may await them if they escape the present danger! Blighted affections, ruined hopes, the torture of losing those they love, or of seeing them exist in wretchedness, may bring them to regret they had not now sunk, secure from experiencing any more of the sufferings human nature is heir to. Would I were in one of those boats! It would be no sin of mine if the waves were to close over it.”

The wives and mothers of the fishermen, who were inured to the venturous life of their relatives, proceeded with their ordinary toil. They had so often seen them weather a storm in safety, that they felt little alarm at what would have struck others as awful. One young woman, however, stole forth alone; her loose cloak shivered in the wind; the wild gust brought with it the spray and dashed it in her face, but still her eyes were strained to catch a glimpse of one frail bark. She knew not that her bonnet was blown back, that her dishevelled hair streamed upon the blast. She gradually drew nearer to the spot where Algernon stood in his desperate musing.

She was a stranger: a girl from the midland counties, who had married one of the hardy young fishermen of this secluded village, and she was not yet accustomed to let the blast howl unheeded round her dwelling, while he she loved was on the wide salt sea.

She approached Algernon. In her loneliness she felt safer when near a fellow-creature.

"Do you think there is any danger, sir?" she said, in a hesitating voice.

"The storm seems to be gathering," he answered; "but most likely you have more experience than I have."

"I have not been here long," she said, "and those great waves, with foamy tops, always terrify me sadly."

"Are you anxious for any one at sea, my good girl?"

"My husband, sir, is in one of those boats."

"And does he love you? Do you love him, and are you lawfully married?"

"Oh, sir! to be sure we are!" and she drew back abashed, and half-angry.

"Then—then you are not to be pitied. In life or in death you are his. You are bound together by the ties of love and of duty, of religion and of law! He will return to you, my girl. See, the boats are getting nearer every moment. They will beat the storm—you will be reunited. You need not weep."

He darted away among the rocks, and sought the little room in the single ale-house, which had been his home for the last month.

His first impulse was to return to Belhanger—to revisit the spot which breathed of her, and having once more beheld the precious child which she had left there as a pledge of her affection for him, to send her with the nurse to rejoin her mother at Captain Wareham's. His resolution was no sooner taken than it was executed.

Ellen and her brother had ere this arrived at the end of their journey. They reached Captain Wareham's just as he, Matilda, and the Allenhams, who were at this moment paying him their annual visit, were seated at their dessert. They were surprised at hearing an unusual bustle in the house, and still more so when Ellen, leaning on her brother, entered the apartment. They all pressed round to greet her. Matilda with youthful delight at this agreeable surprise—Caroline and her husband with kindness—Captain Wareham with some kindness, but more annoyance, which annoyance was, however, in some degree tempered by the respect he had felt for Ellen, ever since she had made so good a marriage as he considered that to Mr. Hamilton.

"Well, my dear Ellen, this is really very good of you to take us so by surprise, but you certainly do take us by surprise. I do not know how in the world we are to lodge you, and the dinner is just gone. And you, too, Henry?" (annoyance was rapidly preponderating,) "I do not know what we can do with you. And I suppose Hamilton is of the party; you might have given one a line. I should have thought, Ellen, you must have remembered how inconvenient this kind of thing is, in a small establishment."

By this time Ellen had sunk in a chair, and Caroline began to be alarmed at her paleness, and at the altered expression of her countenance. The children had just landed from their vehicle, and their voices were heard in the passage.

"Mercy on us! and the children, too!" exclaimed poor Captain Wareham, in a tone of despair, annoyance having thoroughly mastered the vague respect inspired by the superior style of all which surrounded the Hamiltons. "Well, this certainly is rather inconsiderate, Ellen; but when people make great matches they grow fine, and you seem quite to forget your poor old father's means are not quite so ample as Mr. Hamilton's."

He turned round, but started at the ghastly appearance of Ellen. Henry had suffered agonies for his sister, and had tried to lead his father aside, that he might briefly explain to him the case, without proclaiming it to the whole household. Ellen answered with the composure of despair.

"You must let me stay in this house, father,—I do not care where—only I must have the shelter of your paternal roof."

"I can go to the inn perfectly well, dear father," added Henry.

"And Ellen can have her old room," interposed Matilda; "little Caroline can sleep with me, and George can sleep on

the sofa in Mr. Allenham's dressing-room; and now it is all arranged, so don't you be cross, papa. Ellen looks quite ill, and I dare say she is faint for want of something to eat; so leave it all to me, and don't make a fuss, that's all, papa," and she gave her father a playful tap on the cheek. She was a high-spirited, warm-hearted, ingenuous girl, in many respects the precise opposite of her sisters. If her father was cross, her spirit rose, and she consequently possessed that sort of control over him which the most decided, positive, and wilful, generally obtains over the less resolute temper, whatever may be their relative positions. She was also an excellent manager, always had cold meat in the house, and was never at a loss for an expedient on any emergency.

Caroline was exceedingly uneasy at the appearance of Ellen, and remembered her fainting-fits when she had been last at Belhanger. Her look of settled grief, coupled with the absence of Mr. Hamilton, made her fear that, notwithstanding the affection which had formerly subsisted between them, their quarrel must have been a serious one, and that her unannounced arrival must mean that they were separated. She found, also, that only the two Cresford children accompanied her, and this served to confirm her fears.

Even Captain Wareham began to be alarmed at the subdued yet resolute manner of Ellen; and looked from one to the other perplexed, amazed, and annoyed.

"I suppose you want something to eat, Ellen?"

"No, father; I could not touch any thing."

"And the children must have supper."

"Matilda, you will give them some tea, poor little things?" she answered, turning towards Matilda.

"I could not eat a mouthful either," said Henry, "so do not get any thing for me, father. I wish you would just step this way, I want to consult you which inn I had best go to."

"My dear boy, it is very chilly to-night, and you may just as well consult me here by the fire."

"Ellen," added Henry, "would you not be better up-stairs on the sofa? Ellen is not well, father, and we must take great care of her!"

"You do not seem well indeed, Ellen. Why you look ten years older, girl, than when I saw you last!"

Ellen had risen from her seat, and was mechanically obeying Henry in walking up-stairs, when he said,

"Do give Ellen your arm, Allenham, she is faint and weak. I have some things to arrange, and will follow you presently."

has worked us all so much wo. My name will be a lasting disgrace to my children,—all of them !

“Algernon ! when I think of you, my heart is near breaking ; when I think of your return to your desolate home, when I know how you will miss me,—for I judge too well from my own what your feelings will be,—when I think how you will miss the children, too ! Heavens, I have just ordered the nurse to prepare herself and Agnes for our sad journey !—But what right have I to do so ? She is your child, Algernon, and shall I deprive you of that one consolation ? Shall I deprive her of an honourable station to drag her with me into shame and degradation ? No ! my wretchedness can scarcely know increase, and you shall be greeted on your return by her smiles, her outstretched arms, her lovely attempts to prattle. I leave you that precious legacy. She will remind you of her who loves you still with tenfold fervour, though it is now a crime to do so. . .

“There is a sort of pleasure in sacrificing something to you : you shall keep her and cherish her. I expect my brother every moment : he and the other members of the house have likewise received communications from Gratz. I cannot add another word—I cannot sign myself,—for, oh ! what name do I now bear ?”

She hastily sealed her letter, and, without giving herself time to retract, she flew up stairs, and told the nurse that she and Agnes were to remain at Belhanger—that only George and Caroline were to accompany her. The nurse was astonished at the sudden change ; but her mistress looked so ghastly and so wild, she did not venture any question or any remark. Ellen snatched her child to her heart—kissed it with such vehemence that the terrified creature screamed—then, almost thrusting it again into the nurse’s arms, she rushed out of the room, not daring to trust herself another moment in its sight.

She now hastened into her own apartments, and, without allowing herself time for tender emotions or reminiscences, she began to pack up her papers, her letters, a few favourite books of devotion, some of the many tokens of affection she had received from Algernon, and above all, his picture—that picture which she gazed upon every day, ten times every day, during his absence.

While thus employed, she saw her maid arranging her diamonds, and other jewels, for the journey.

“Do not put up those,” she said, in a clear, calm voice ; “they must be left here.”

“Dear ma’am, we always take them with us wherever we

go; I always think they are safest when they are under my own eye."

"They must remain, Stanmore," answered Ellen, almost sternly.

"Just as you please, ma'am, certainly," replied the abigail, whose feelings on the subject of the diamonds were so acute that she could not look with indifference upon any thing that concerned them, although she saw something had certainly happened which greatly discomposed her mistress, and was really tenderly attached to her.

"Would you please to leave all the trinkets, ma'am?" she added, with rather a mortified, injured accent.

"No, Stanmore; I must take these rings, these bracelets, all these things—they were all given to me by dear friends."

"I am sure, ma'am, I should have thought you might have wished what Mr. Hamilton had given you to go along with us."

"Say no more, Stanmore; I cannot bear it.—Only make haste,—all possible haste!—I must go to my father to-day."

"Dear me! I beg your pardon, ma'am; but is Captain Wareham ill?"

"No—yes—I am not sure—I believe he is pretty well."

Ellen left the room, having secured the few articles she much valued; and having told Stanmore to carry the diamonds to the housekeeper, and bid her give them to Mr. Hamilton when he returned.

"How strange!" said Mrs. Stanmore to herself. "Master and mistress must have quarrelled desperately, somehow or another. And to think how loving they did seem to be till just at last! Well, they say such violent love is too hot to hold. I shall think of that when next Mr. Perkins says a civil word to me, and give him a civil word in return, for all he is not the man of my heart; for it's my belief all the love should be on the man's side. How well my poor mistress and Mr. Cresford went on, though he was so queer; and now she has got a husband she loves, this is the end of it all! Ah! it does not do to make too much of the men. If one has a man one does not care for, one has one's wits about one, to know how to manage him."

While Mrs. Stanmore was making these sage reflections (in which there is much deserving attention from the young and inexperienced), Ellen, who could not sit still, and who was afraid to trust herself with her child, wandered like an inquiet spirit about the house, longing to visit every well-known room, and to bid each a sad adieu; but she met servants in every

the particulars of her separation; but, Ellen assured her the subject was at present too painful to dwell upon; and they remained together in melancholy calmness not unmixed with *gêne*, for Caroline was somewhat hurt at Ellen's reserve.

She had one conversation with her father, in which he was all kindness and sympathy, and she now sat down to a task which she deemed one of absolute necessity, although of the utmost difficulty, namely, to write to Mr. Cresford a letter which should meet him on his arrival in London, and convey to him the dreadful intelligence, which sooner or later must reach him.

It was as follows:—

“I know not how to address you, and I dread lest you should have heard from some other quarter all that has occurred, and may cast aside the letter of one whom you deem untrue to you, without reading her own statement of the facts.

“Believe me, when I swear by every thing we hold most sacred, that the first communication I received from you, from the time I read the official account of your death in the public newspapers, was the letter I received last month dated from Gratz. I had then for two years believed myself the wife of Mr. Hamilton.

“As I write these words, my spirit quails at the effect I know they must produce on you—my heart bleeds for the pain I am inflicting on you; for indeed I do justice to the strength of your affection for me, and I grieve to be thus the cause of anguish to one who loves me! It is a cruel return for all the fidelity you have preserved to me; but you must know the truth, and I had rather you should learn it from me, than from common report,—from the busy tongue of slander.

“Mr. Maitland never brought me the letter to which you allude. I have never seen any of your companions in misfortune, except Colonel Eversham, who told me how he followed your remains to the grave, and I have yet to learn by what means you effected your escape from Verdun. For two years I mourned you in sincerity and truth. During all that time I regulated my conduct by what I supposed would have been your wishes if you had been able to express them to me before your supposed death.

“Some months after the expiration of my two years' mourning, I accepted the hand of Mr. Hamilton. You must feel, that although this second marriage is null and void, and that in the eye of the law I am your wife, an eternal barrier is placed between yourself and me.

serve as a sort of picture to which her mind's eye might at any time recur. She marked every chair and table, the very pattern of the cornice, the mouldings on the book-cases, the carving of the chimney-piece. She touched all the papers, the parliamentary reports which crowded the table, and which might have been touched by him.

At this moment a chaise drove up to the door, and her brother Henry leaped out of it. In another moment Ellen was in his arms, and clinging to him in the full abandonment of long pent-up sorrow, which at length is allowed free vent. There was a degree of relief in the presence of one to whom she might unburthen her whole soul, from whom she need have no secrets, and with whom she need be under no restraint.

This weakness, however, was not of long duration. She quickly shook it off, and rousing herself, she uttered in a firm though hurrying manner :

"We must be gone directly, Henry. You will take me to my father's ; you will go with me, dear brother, will you not ?"

"Where is Hamilton ?" he answered.

"He has not been here since I received the first packet you enclosed me. We parted then !" She pressed her hand for a moment tightly upon her eyeballs.

"Do you then consider the case so hopeless, my poor dear sister ?"

"Alas ! I have from the very first, although he would scarcely believe me."

"Oh, dreadful ! dreadful ! What is to be done ?"

"I must go to my father, and I must leave the rest to Providence. I have not wittingly done wrong, so I hope God will assist me to bear that with which it is his pleasure to visit me !"

"My poor, poor Ellen !"

"Do not pity me, Henry !" I have prayed for strength, and hitherto I have been mercifully supported. Do not pity me, or I shall not be able to go through what must be done this day."

"Ellen ! By Heavens, you are the most high-minded, courageous, and noble, as well as the gentlest and loveliest creature I ever saw ! Whatever the result may be, you are certainly doing what is right. I am ready to accompany you."

"Every thing is prepared, Henry. I have only one task left, that of bidding adieu to my baby—my little Agnes !"

"Do you leave her behind you ?"

"I cannot rob Algernon of that which will remind him of me, and yet give him pleasure, instead of pain. Neither will

that moment been at her feet, there is no knowing whether she might not have consented to fly with him to the wilds of America, or to any spot on earth where human institutions could not reach.

When Algernon arrived at Belhanger, a few days after Ellen's departure, he lost no time in sending little Agnes to rejoin her mother. He thought the presence of her child,—his child,—might afford her the sensation nearest approaching to pleasure of any thing she was now capable of experiencing. It was not without many a bitter pang that he brought himself to part from the only object that remained to him of all that a few short weeks ago had made him the happiest man alive. But in addition to his anxiety to lessen by any means within his power the bitterness of her fate, it is possible that a lingering hope mingled itself, that she could not refuse to let him occasionally see his child, and that he might perhaps thus obtain an interview with herself.

His home was now utterly desolate. He wandered as she had done before, like an unquiet spirit, from room to room. He pictured to himself what must have been her feelings when she tore herself from them. He longed to know how she had passed that last sad month; he wished for every trifling detail concerning her occupations, her looks, and yet he did not like to question the servants. He saw in their faces an expression of wonder and dismay; they moved about with stealthy steps, and spoke with subdued voices, while in the part of the house which he inhabited; or else, as he passed by the offices, he heard the loud laugh proceeding from the servants' hall, or the blithe carol of the laundry-maids over their wash-tub, which jarred his feelings, and he was tempted to exclaim mentally against the heartlessness of menials. Their curiosity and their want of sympathy both checked the inclination to question them concerning Ellen, which his restlessness caused frequently to arise in his bosom. Moreover, he scarcely knew in what terms to speak of her.

Mrs. Topham, however, spared him the trouble of deciding for himself. A few days after his return, she made her appearance to receive his orders about the furniture of the chintz-room, saying that Mrs. Hamilton had desired her to ask him what he wished to have done, and also to inquire his pleasure concerning the neckcloths. He begged her to use her own discretion on those subjects, but still detained her in conversation, hoping she would of her own accord allude to Ellen.

CHAPTER X.

En songe, souhaid, et pensée,
 Vous voye chacun jour de sepmaine
 Combien qu'estes de moi loingtaine
 Belle très loyaument amée.

Du tout vous ay m'amour donnée ;
 Vous en pavez être certaine,
 Ma seule dame souveraine,
 De mon las cœur moult désirée
 En songe, soubaid, et pensée.

CHARLES DUC D'ORLEANS, A. D. 1446.

How did poor Hamilton meanwhile pass the time of his weary exile? It would have been wretchedness to him to have been recognised, to have been obliged to answer the usual inquiries after his wife and children, with which a married man is invariably greeted; to endure all the common courtesies of life. Yet his acquaintance was so general, his name so well known, from having on many occasions borne a prominent part in politics, and from having lived much in the world, that he could scarcely find a spot where he would not be exposed to them.

He therefore, under an assumed name, retired to the most desolate fishing village he could find in the neighbourhood of M——, and passed his days wandering upon the shore, and mixing with none but the fishers, who plied their dangerous trade upon the wild Welsh coast.

Every morning he walked into the town, and claimed his letters at the post-office, then hurried to the shore, there to feast upon the lines traced by his beloved Ellen's hand. The enthusiastic turn of mind, which we at first described him as possessing, enabled him, better perhaps than another man, to endure the life of abnegation of self which he here led. His passion was of so pure, so refined a character, that in sober truth, he had rather sit alone on a sea-girt rock, and think of her whom he worshipped with so holy a love, than be in the society of any other living being, however lovely, however fascinating.

Weeks however elapsed, and even his highly-wrought nature was beginning to tire of this protracted uncertainty. He formed a thousand desperate plans; he nearly convinced himself

the ultimate and eternal welfare of their child as by causing its young mind to be trained to all that was virtuous, under Ellen's own immediate eye. She could not but be gratified by his opinion of her, and grateful for his kindness.

It was about a fortnight from the period of their final separation, when Henry Wareham was one day called out of his office to speak to a gentleman who awaited him in a private apartment. Henry's heart misgave him. His worst fears were on the point of being realized. It must be Cresford.

The room was dark. Henry's eyes were dizzy with intense anxiety; he thought he did not recognise the face; but it was Cresford's voice which asked,

"Are you Henry Wareham?"

"Heavens! Cresford! Is it indeed yourself?"

"Where is my wife?" uttered Cresford, in a choked tone of defiance.

"Ellen is with her father," stammered Henry.

"Why was she not here to receive her husband?" continued Cresford.

"Here is a letter, Cresford, which she desired me to give you, and which will explain all."

"Then what I have heard is true!" exclaimed Cresford, in a burst of uncontrollable passion. "Your virtuous sister thought I was safe in an Austrian dungeon, and she has given the loose to her profligate fancies, under the specious veil of marriage! Well done, your sanctified hypocrite! The mourning widow of Ephesus with a vengeance!" And he laughed an appalling, withering laugh, which made Henry shudder. His eyes glared with the fire of madness. Henry almost shrank with the involuntary terror from which the bravest cannot defend themselves if they suspect mental aberration in a fellow-creature.

"Cresford, read this letter, and I think you will not make use of such hard expressions. Though you may be miserable, you will not be so angry."

"So, because I have loved her with mad idolatry, because my passion for her has driven me to acts of desperation,—has driven me to set at nought my life—my safety, you think I am such a besotted fool, that three lines traced by her hand are to turn the whole current of my feelings; that she can persuade me quietly to yield her to the arms of my rival." He paused, then added in a deep and thrilling voice, "You neither of you know me. You know not half I have gone through."

"Cresford, all I implore is that you will read my sister's letter. We all believed you dead. The partners in the firm all believed it."

"It was their interest—it was your interest to do so," he answered, with a bitter smile.

However, he took the letter.

"Oh, how I have longed to see any thing belonging to her. And now—"

A tear gathered in his eye. Henry augured well of that omen, and stood in silence, somewhat apart.

He had leisure to remark the havoc which time, and suffering, and as he began to fear, madness, had worked in the fine features of his brother-in-law. They were sharper, his nose more prominent, his lips thinner, and more compressed. His brow low on his eye, which glanced quickly and suspiciously from beneath it. Although still young, for Cresford was not yet thirty, his hair was considerably mixed with gray.

Henry watched the varying expression of his countenance as he proceeded with poor Ellen's letter, and he sincerely commiserated the wretched man, who was now a prey to the most agonizing passions of our nature—blasted hope—indignant jealousy.

When he came to the part in which she spoke of having for two years believed herself the wife of Mr. Hamilton, he stamped upon the floor, and crushing the paper in his clenched hand, Henry thought would have destroyed it, in the paroxysm of his rage. However, he proceeded, and a softer shade stole over his face when he read of her grief at making such a return for all his kindness and affection. A tear trickled down his cheek as he came to the part where she described her strict adherence to his wishes; and when she mentioned her having parted from Mr. Hamilton upon the reception of his first letter, he vehemently laid his hand on Henry's arm.

"Is this true?" he said. "Did she part from that man at once?"

"Indeed she did, and has not seen him since."

"Henry, did she love him?—answer me that."

Henry hesitated—"They seemed to live comfortably together, whenever I have seen them."

"Madness! distraction! Did they love each other?"

"I saw but little of them, for I was always in the office," replied Henry, evasively.

"I must see her,—I must see her herself; I must know the truth!" He resumed the letter, but hastily passing over that part which spoke of resignation, "There is no use in preaching resignation to me! She might as well attempt to chain the ocean!" He glanced at the signature. "Oh, merciful Hea-

ven ! that I could forget all that has gone before ; that I could annihilate the preceding words, and preserve nothing but the last, ' Your faithful wife, Ellen Cresford ! ' "

He gazed in rapturous tenderness upon the words ; his tears flowed fast ; he kissed the name again and again. Then hastily turning to Henry, he added, " I must see her once again, and then—God knows what will become of me ! "

He rushed out of the house, and before many minutes had elapsed was on his road to Captain Wareham's residence.

CHAPTER XII.

Shall then, in earnest truth,
My careful eyes observe her ?
Shall I consume my youth,
And short my time to serve her ?

Shall I, beyond my strength,
Let passion's torments prove me,
To hear her say at length
" Away,—I cannot love thee ! "

GEORGE WITHER.—A. D. 1588.

ELLEN was one morning quietly seated in the back drawing-room which had been given up to her and her children ; the elder ones were employed, George in reading to his mother, and Caroline in working, seated on a stool at her feet, while the little Agnes was playing on the floor. Ellen heard a knock at the door. Every sound made her start. She heard a loud voice in the passage ! A voice ! His voice ! Yes, it was his voice whom she had so long believed in the grave, uttering in loud and stern accents, " Show me to Mrs. Cresford,—I must instantly see her," and he darted by the servant up the stairs.

" Not into the front-room, sir," the servant called out ; " there is company in the front-room ! the back-room, sir, if you please."

Cresford burst open the door, and stood before her, pale and haggard. She did not faint, she did not scream : she had risen from her seat, and she stood transfixed.

She was as beautiful as ever. Sorrow could but dim her brilliancy,—the finely chiselled features, the marble brow, the angelic expression, the feminine dignity, were all there. Cresford gazed in agonized admiration,

"How I have longed for this moment!—this moment, which proves one of torture! Ellen, Ellen, you never loved me, or you could not have done what you have done. But I was resolved to see you again.—Yes, if heaven and hell had conspired against me, I would have gazed upon that face again." She hid her face with her hands. "No," he said, and forcibly removed them, "I will look upon those features. It was the recollection of those eyes, of that brow, those lips, which made me cling to life, while they induced me to hazard it a thousand times to gain another sight of them; it was to gaze on them that I practised the imposture by which I escaped from my prison; it was to gaze on them that I preserved my life, though treated as a spy, a prisoner, and a maniac!"

Ellen shook from head to foot. Fear, simple, deadly fear, absorbed every other feeling. She spoke not, she struggled not.

"Ellen, do you love me still? Have you thought of me in my absence? Have you wept for me? Is your heart faithful?"

A horrible surmise crossed her. Surely he could not contemplate the idea of taking her back.—"Do you love me, Ellen?" he repeated, and he still held her hands.

"I pity you from the bottom of my heart."

"Do you love me?" and he dashed her hands from him.

"No!" she exclaimed, clasping them earnestly, "No! my whole heart, soul, and affections are Algernon's!" and she sank on the floor.

"And do I live to hear you avow your guilt? Shameless, abandoned creature! You, whom I so worshipped! now, now,—in truth my brain will madden!" He struck his forehead with his clenched hands. Then looking round, "These are my children, are they not?—I believed them mine. Yes, yes, they are mine, and mine they shall be! Come with me, children; you shall not remain to be contaminated by the example of a creature who glories in her shame. And this," he added, and lifted the little Agnes from the floor, "this, this is *his* child! Take it,—take it, before I commit any crime I may repent of!" Ellen rushed to it, tore it from him, and hugged it to her bosom. "But these are mine!" he continued, "and these are mine by every law of nature and of man!" He seized one in each hand. She flew to him,—she clung round his feet. He looked down on her in triumph.

"Oh, spare my children! Oh, Charles, have mercy upon me," and she desperately held the children who clung round her,

At this moment Captain Wareham, who had heard the tumult, entered.

"Captain Wareham, you see a man who claims his children—his children—by the law of the land his! I conclude you will not interfere with the exercise of my rights as a freeborn Englishman."

• Ellen had sunk exhausted and sobbing on the floor, feeling that her father would protect her, and preserve her children.

"Surely, Mr. Cresford, this is not the manner in which an Englishman, and a gentleman, would enforce his rights."

"I have been taunted by that woman with her love for another man, and I cannot leave my children in her keeping. They must be delivered up to me."

"They shall—they shall, Mr. Cresford. I pledge myself that before evening they shall be sent to you, at any place you may appoint."

"I am at the hotel opposite, sir, and there I await them within the next two hours."

He darted down the stairs, and out of the house.

The terrified children hung round their mother; Captain Wareham supported her; Caroline—Matilda rushed in. Concealment was no longer practicable—despair and consternation prevailed through the whole house. The two Misses Parks, who had been the company in the front drawing-room," discreetly took their departure, but not before they had seen and heard enough to be perfectly *au fait* as to the cause of the confusion, and, in a quarter of an hour, the fact of Mrs. Hamilton's first husband's return was known in every house in the Close, and in half an hour more throughout the whole town. But one feeling, however, prevailed—sincere sorrow for the unfortunate Ellen!

Her manners were so gentle she had not an enemy—her conduct so irreproachable that even the slander of a country-town coterie had never approached her name. Every one felt disposed to be angry with Mr. Cresford for being alive, and many a parent made use of the event to impress upon the minds of their children the dreadful consequences of a deviation from truth, under any circumstances whatsoever.

• Why should we return to the scene where Ellen is helplessly kissing her two elder children, while they are as helplessly hanging around her? The idea of resistance never for a moment crossed her. The strong arm of the law she knew could wrest them from her—there was no hope of touching Cresford's heart. Ellen thought this was the bitterest drop of all in her

cup of wo. To be parted from the beings over whose welfare, bodily and mental, she had so carefully watched; in whom she had with tender and patient care sown the seeds of good, which she now saw every day bearing fruit according to her most sanguine wishes! The instinctive bond between mother and child may be equally strong at all ages; but when, in addition to the natural pang at such a tie being severed, there is the sorrowful and disappointing prospect of seeing your labour of love all wasted, and the grief of seeing your sorrow shared by the innocent sufferers, there can be no anguish more poignant, more hopeless.

In man there may exist a preference towards the children of the woman he loves, over those of the woman he has not loved—not so in the gentler sex. It frequently happens that maternal affection is the more powerful principle in those who have been disappointed in their hopes of conjugal happiness. The heart whose tenderness has been repelled in one quarter expands and fixes itself in the one other lawful direction, and Ellen's love for her elder children fully equalled that she felt for the child of Algernon.

She has taken her last kiss of them; she has for the last time wrapped the handkerchiefs close round their throats to defend them from the chill of the evening; she has for the thousandth time bade them be good children, and implored them to remember all she has told them concerning their duty to God and to their fellow-creatures. Above all, she made them both promise never to forget to say their prayers, and added, "Never forget to pray for me, my children."

"No, no, mamma; but we shall see you again soon."

"We will hope so, my loves—we shall, I trust, meet again, here or elsewhere," and her eyes sought that Heaven to which her spirit longed to flee and be at rest.

"We are not always to remain with that pale dark stranger?"

"He is your father, my children. You owe to him the same duty you owe to me." But she could not bid them love him, obey him, watch his every look, and attend to his every word as they did to hers, for alas! she remembered but too well what was his violent uncertain temper in happier days, and she trembled to think to what guardianship their helpless innocence was committed.

"If strangers," she added, "should speak slightly of me, darlings,—my own dear, good children will not believe them. I know they will not."

Once more they were locked in a long and close embrace—

gradually she relaxed her hold. Matilda, Caroline, Captain Wareham gently unwound them from her. The awe-struck children let themselves be quietly withdrawn, and, when Ellen recovered from her swoon, they were with their father some miles on the road to London.

What were Cresford's emotions?—Such was the tumult of his soul they could scarcely be defined. The circumstances under which the children had been introduced to their father were not such as to inspire them with filial affection; and, notwithstanding their mother's parting injunction, they looked upon him with fear and horror, as the stranger who had made mamma so unhappy, and had taken them away from her in such a hurry. They could not the least comprehend what was meant by this man's being their father, for they remembered wearing black frocks for a long, long time, because their father was dead.

Cresford saw the instinctive terror with which, when he kissed them, and bade them love him, they shrank from his caresses. With increased bitterness he exclaimed, "She has taught them to hate me! My own children hate me,—my wife disowns me! I am an outcast on the face of the earth! It had been better, a thousand times better, for me to have consumed away the remnant of my existence in my dungeon! There I had hope!—I could think of my Ellen,—of my children! and fancy the time might come when I should once more know happiness with them. Oh! for those visionary days of fancied bliss!—how much better than this horrible waking certainty of endless misery! But I will be revenged! if I am miserable, those who have made me so shall not be happy!" And at that moment he took the resolution of availing himself of every power which the law placed in his hands, of bringing her who had caused him to be the wretch he was to open and public shame.

The rest of the journey was performed in silence. His heart had been too long seared by suffering to open to parental affection. His children showed none for him; he was not in a state of mind to attempt to win it by patient kindness, and he felt injured as a father, as well as a husband. In truth, a calmer, gentler disposition than his might have had all the milk of human kindness turned to gall in his situation. He had most truly loved his wife, and his case was as pitiable, and as hopeless a one as can well be imagined. The mental aberration to which he had slightly alluded, and which had prevented him for some years from even attempting to make his

imprisonment in Austria known either to his friends or to the government, had been brought on by the vehement and ungoverned nature of his passions; which, as might be expected did not meet with the soothing treatment calculated to allay them, but, on the contrary, with every thing tending most to inflame and irritate them. The reason which might have controlled them remained, in some degree, weakened, while the passions themselves were in full force.

Upon his arrival in London he deposited his children at a hotel, and sallied forth in search of a lawyer. He walked to Lincoln's Inn, and knocked at the first door that presented itself. He was admitted, and was shown up to a middle-aged, quiet little man, with spectacles upon his nose.

CHAPTER XIII.

Gomez.—And wouldst thou bare thy bosom's grief to one,
A dull mechanic, who but stares on thee
With cold unmeaning wonder? I had rather
The secret pang should rankle at the core,
And eat my life away, than my dear thoughts
Be made thus stale and common. Hast no friend,
No tried companion, whose unwearied ear
Would ease thy o'ercharged breast?

Pedro.— Not one—not one!
I am alone, with such a sum of ills
As o'erturns reason.

Manuscript Tragedy.

"Sir," said Cresford to the lawyer, "I come to you for justice. You see before you a man who has been deeply injured in his honour, his affections, and his rights as a man, a husband, and a father."

Mr. M'Leod pointed to a chair, and begged the gentleman to be seated—professed his willingness to lend any assistance in his power to a person who appeared to be suffering under such injuries, and begged him calmly to detail to him the circumstances of the case, that he might judge in what mode he could best render this assistance.

"I am calm, sir: if you knew all, you would wonder at my calmness. During the year of peace in 1802, I was called to France on mercantile business. I left a wife I adored—Oh

sir, she was the loveliest creature that ever walked this earth!—she seemed as pure as she was lovely. I worshipped her as the Persians of old worshipped the sun. She was every thing to me! I scarcely suffered the wind to blow on her. The gaze of another man appeared to me almost pollution to a creature so sacred. I left her with her father, as I thought, in honour and in safety, and with her my two children.

“Every one knows the fate of those who were found in France upon the declaration of hostilities. I was one of the *détenus*, and at Verdun I was condemned to drag out many, many weary months, in absence from her I so madly adored. A vague jealousy, a fear of what might occur in my absence, racked my brain almost to madness. I would not accept my parole; the severity of my imprisonment was nothing to me. Of what avail was the liberty of wandering a few miles from the town to one whose whole soul was in another land! It mattered little to me where I was detained, if I was far from her, and I would be bound by no ties of honour from attempting every thing in my power to make my escape. Several times I had nearly accomplished it, but each time the vigilance of my jailers overtook me.

“At length I thought of a plan which proved successful. I wrote a letter to my wife, informing her that I intended to counterfeit illness,—on my feigned deathbed to obtain permission to be buried by torch-light in the Protestant burying-ground outside the town, and with the assistance of my friend and only confidant, Morton, to follow my own funeral procession, at night, wrapped in a military cloak, as one of the mourners. Every thing succeeded to my wishes. I was considered as falling a victim to my mental sufferings, and my fate excited pity. I obtained the permission required. Morton administered a strong sleeping draught, and as he was my constant attendant he pronounced me dead. I was placed in my coffin, and on the evening of my funeral, which was the next succeeding my supposed death, he begged to be allowed to weep in private over the bier of his best friend, and took that opportunity of opening the coffin, dressing me in the clothes which he had conveyed into the room, filling the coffin with some billets of wood which had been brought to make up the fire, and of concealing me in an adjoining closet till the moment arrived for the procession to move on. I then mixed among the mourners, and by favour of the darkness escaped detection. As most of the other officers were on parole, there was no difficulty made as to the number who passed the gates, and with

a palpitating heart I found myself, unfettered by any pledge of honour, beyond the walls of Verdun.

"It was not till all present were occupied in actually lowering the coffin into the ground that I ventured to absent myself. I took that moment to steal away, and plunging into a neighbouring thicket, I remained there closely concealed, till they had all wound their way back into the town.

"Morton had placed for me a peasant's dress, a bag of provisions, and some money, in a hollow tree, the situation of which he had so accurately described to me that I found it without much loss of time, and having changed my dress, and carefully concealed my military costume, I dashed right onwards, and before morning had cleared three leagues. I need not tell you how I made my way from day to day—how I crossed the Rhine in an open boat, which in my wanderings I found moored to the shore; how I was in Germany immediately seized as a spy, and how, for four years, I was enabled still to endure the tortures of an Austrian dungeon, by the distant hope of some day being restored to my Ellen,—*my* Ellen! I thought her *mine* then! I have escaped from my dungeon—I have returned! I came to my home—no one knew me—I asked for my wife—I received no answer—I inquired for my children—they were at Mr. Hamilton's!—for that is his name—that is the name of the man who has robbed me of my wife—my wedded, lawful wife!—for she is my wife! By the law of the land she is my wife, sir! There is justice for me in this land of law, of liberty, of impartial justice, is there not? She can be prosecuted for bigamy, sir. She must be found guilty. I come to you to learn how to proceed—Do you advise me, guide me. Oh! my brain is confused and maddened! I cannot, cannot think!"

Cresford paced the apartment in violent agitation. The quiet lawyer looked up from his spectacles, and half wondered whether his would-be client was quite in his right senses. Cresford had not paused for a moment. There was a relief in thus disburthening himself of all that had long been pent up in his soul. He had found those who were nearest and dearest to him severed, eternally severed from him. All other ties and affections were as nothing before those which had been thus rudely rent asunder, and having once begun to speak to this stranger, he poured forth all his tale as to his best friend. He might also be prompted to indulge in this confidence by a feeling unknown to himself, that a person totally unacquainted with Ellen, would be more likely to listen

with complete sympathy to his wrongs, than any one who had known, or even seen her.

Mr. M'Leod answered,

"Indeed, sir, your case appears to be a very hard one. You wrote, you say, to your wife, to inform her of the plan you meant to adopt?"

"I wrote to her, explaining the whole thing, and sent the letter by my friend Maitland, who succeeded in making his escape a month before I put my plan in execution. I waited to make sure he got off in safety. He wrote to me the evening before he sailed in a fishing-vessel for England."

"And you are confident she received this letter?"

"She says she did not—but she had fallen in love with Hamilton! She never loved me, I am now sure she never loved me," he repeated, in a tone of deep despondency; but he continued with more bitterness, "It was very convenient to her to believe in my death; convenient to my partners in trade to divide the profits of the business—very convenient for her brother to be admitted to a share. Ha! ha! ha! they have all revelled in my spoils—they thought me safe in my dungeon! But I am here—I am alive—they cannot prove me dead. I will wrest my wife, my children, my property, from the spoiler's grasp!" and he laughed a wild laugh of desperation.

It had been Mr. M'Leod's fate frequently to see people under a state of great excitement, so that although he feared his visitor's mind might be somewhat warped by his misfortunes, he did not doubt there was ground for all he stated, and he now inquired methodically into his name, his connexions, his residence.

He remembered the name as one of considerable note in the mercantile world, and he had some recollection of having heard his death mentioned, as one of the melancholy consequences of the cruel and unjustifiable act of arbitrary power, which must always be a disgrace on the name of Napoleon.

"Indeed, Mr. Cresford," rejoined M'Leod, "I pity you most sincerely—whether your wife may be to blame or not."

"Whether my wife may be to blame or not? And do I hear an Englishman, whose profession it is to right the injured, to procure justice for all indifferently—do I hear him advocate the cause of the faithless wife? then, indeed, have I little chance of redress!"

"My good sir, you misunderstand me entirely. I do not mean to advocate her cause, or anybody's cause. I merely mean to say that I am very sorry for you, whether your wife

did ever receive the letter you wrote to her, or whether she did not."

"She did receive it—she must have received it; and, if she did not, she should have waited for some more positive and certain information of my death, than common report!"

"Very true, Mr. Cresford—quite true, sir; yet, if you had been dead, it would not have been easy for you to write her word you were dead, though she might have expected to hear from you that you were alive."

"Is there justice for me in the laws of my country, or is there not?" repeated Cresford, sternly.

"Certainly, sir. In this country there is justice for everybody."

"Then how am I to seek redress? In what court?"

"Why, if by redress you mean revenge, that is to be obtained by prosecuting your wife for bigamy, in which case the trial would take place at the assizes of the county in which the marriage ceremony was performed: but, under the circumstances of the case under which the crime of bigamy was committed, I conclude, that if she quits the roof of her second husband—"

"He is not her husband, sir; I am her husband, and I will prove it. She, the immaculate—the refined—who seemed to shrink from my love as too impassioned—she shall be proved to have been living in sin with another man!"

"Does she still reside with Mr. —I beg your pardon, what was the name you mentioned?"

"Hamilton—Hamilton is his name—and curses on it!" exclaimed Cresford, goaded to madness by the cool and methodical manner of the lawyer, who, though a lawyer, was an honest straightforward man, with plain manners and a good heart.

"Does she still reside with Mr. Hamilton?"

"No! she is with her father. She had not the face to live on with Hamilton when she knew I was alive, and on my way home."

"And your children, sir, does she make any difficulty about sending them to you?"

"No! I brought them away with me yesterday."

"Then I do not exactly understand what redress you seek at the arm of the law."

The clear head and the kind heart of the lawyer made him begin to see that, although a most singular and lamentable case, it was one in which all parties were more deserving of pity than of blame, and it seemed to him that the poor woman had acted as well as she could under the unfortunate circumstances.

"Have you and Mrs. Cresford had an interview since your return, and in what manner did she comport herself?"

"I saw her yesterday. I saw her in all her loveliness—I could almost have forgotten every thing—for the moment it was such rapture to gaze on her again; when she told me, in so many words, that her whole heart and soul were his—my rival's."

"Poor woman!" ejaculated Mr. McLeod.

"And is it she whom you pity? Am I doomed to be scorned and persecuted by the whole human race? To be hated by all who are bound to me by the nearest and dearest ties? Are even strangers to take part against me? But I will have revenge, if I cannot have sympathy. I will be feared, if I cannot be loved. I would fain be loved; it was my nature to love, and to wish for love in return." His voice softened, and the tears swam in his eyes, "But I have never been loved—no, she never did love me! He had her first affections—her whole affections! Oh, how those words ring in my ears!"

Mr. McLeod was moved by his expressions of wretchedness, and rising from his seat, he took his hand kindly.

"Though I am a stranger to you, sir, I pity you most sincerely," he said, "and I wish I could persuade you to look more calmly on the case."

"Can you—will you assist me?"

"Explain to me in what mode you wish for my assistance."

"Will you undertake the prosecution of Ellen Cresford for bigamy?"

"Why, I must consider a little about it. I am an odd sort of fellow, and though I am a lawyer, I have a corner of conscience," and Mr. McLeod smiled. Cresford hated him for being able to smile. "I do not engage in any thing till I know a little more about the matter. I am very well off in the world, and I do not want to make money, by causing my fellow-creatures to be more unhappy than they need be. I can't tell what I might do if I was poor; but thank God, I can afford to dismiss a client, if I think that no good can come of gaining his cause."

"Then you dismiss me, Mr. McLeod?"

"I do not justly say that; but I should like to know how truly your wife believed you were dead and buried, and whether she had got acquainted with the other gentleman before she heard the news of your death, and a few more such questions; for it runs in my head, that though your case is a hard one, hers may be a hard one too, and that the best thing you could both do would be to let each other alone, and bear your misfortunes as well as you can."

"It is easy enough to preach forbearance, and patience, and submission, and resignation. You would not find them quite so easy to practise. I did not come to you, Mr. M'Leod, for ghostly counsel. I came to you for professional advice. Thus much I have ascertained, that the offence will be tried at the county assizes, and the punishment—?"

"Mercy upon me, sir! You do not really wish your wife to be transported when you deceived her with a false report of your death. I will have nothing to say to the matter, Mr. Cresford. You may find another solicitor, who is sharper set for a job than I am."

Cresford seized his hat, and muttering between his teeth, "Friend and foes, stranger and the wife of my bosom,—all leagued against me!" he made a slight bow to the honest lawyer, and again found himself jostled in the busy throng of London.

One thing, however, he had ascertained, that the prosecution would take place at her native town, and he felt a certain pleasure in the idea that she would be held up to disgrace there, among the very people who knew he was the betrayed and the detested husband. Those who were aware of the humiliating situation in which he was placed, would be witnesses of his revenge.

CHAPTER XIV.

And sudden hurricanes sweep all around,
That strip the tender leaves, and whirl amain,
While dread convulsions heave the shuddering ground,
And rocks and caves with hollow moan complain;
For anger hight, the lord of this domain,
Who when he fondly deems the ruin brought
On others' fame and fortunes, his dear gain,
Finds that his own destruction he hath wrought,
And on himself hath wreaked the vengeance that he sought.

Manuscript Poem.

ONE other mode of vengeance Cresford was determined to pursue, namely, to call out Mr. Hamilton. He returned to the hotel, and there he sat down to write a challenge, couched in language such as he thought must goad any man to give him the satisfaction for which he pined.

Having from the red-book ascertained the direction to Mr. Hamilton's place, he sent it by the post, for there was no one to whom he could apply on this emergency. He had not yet communicated with any of the partners of his house; he had seen no one except Henry Wareham; he felt that all living beings were his foes, and he therefore could not bring himself to have recourse to any of those who formerly called themselves his friends. He fancied he should only thereby expose himself to meeting with fresh unkindness and want of sympathy.

When he had despatched his letter to Hamilton, he sent for his children into the room where he was sitting. They came pale and frightened. He tried to talk to them. He strove to adapt his conversation to their age. He asked them how they liked London, whether they had walked in the streets, and told them they should go to Kensington Gardens; but his eye was wild, his manner fierce and hurried, and they scarcely ventured to answer him. He soon sent them back to their attendant, his feelings rather imbittered than softened by the interview.

When he was able to fix his mind to the consideration of any subject, he became aware that he ought to arrange something more proper and more advantageous for them than their present mode of life, and he resolved, provided he did not fall by the hand of Hamilton, to take a small house in the immediate vicinity of London, where they might reside with their *bonne*, who had been with them for some time, and where they might also have the advantage of masters.

He impatiently awaited Hamilton's answer. It came; and in the first rage of disappointment he tore it into a thousand fragments. Hamilton distinctly and positively refused to meet Mr. Cresford, and told him that no taunts, no insults should ever induce him to do so.

Cresford threw himself into a chaise, and in half an hour was on the Portsmouth road. When he arrived within sight of Belhanger he gave a second letter to a messenger, and desired it to be instantly delivered to Mr. Hamilton. In this he branded him with the name of coward, and he flattered himself it was such as must secure to him the revenge he coveted.

Dismissing his chaise, he approached the scene of Ellen's former happiness, and prowled around the precincts with redoubled feelings of jealousy. The loveliness of the place excited his envy—the venerable-looking manor-house, the old oaks, the deer! Yet from these things he gleaned a momentary consolation. Perhaps it was the splendour of the connexion that tempted her! But, oh no! the expression of her counte-

nance, when she said her whole heart, soul, and affections, were Algernon's! Those words sounded again in his ears, and he longed to find himself in mortal struggle with the man of whom she could so speak.

He hurried back to the inn, hoping his last letter must have provoked an answer consonant to his wishes. He found an envelope, containing his own despatch unopened.

There was no further redress to be sought; and he had but to retrace his steps to London, if possible, more infuriated than before.

Algernon had not trusted himself to read this second letter. He had resolved that no earthly power should tempt him to lift his hand against her husband: he was determined to commit no act that would place a barrier between himself and Ellen, which neither time nor change of circumstances could remove. Cresford was mortal as well as himself, or Ellen; and if, although he might wait till extreme old age, there was a possibility of their ever being reunited, no act of his should have rendered their reunion impracticable.

Cresford returned to London, and he quickly put into execution the plan for the establishment of his children. It was necessary to enter into something like an arrangement with his partners. As yet he had taken no measures towards resuming his place among them; he had made himself known to none of his old acquaintances; he had communicated with no one except those we have already mentioned.

But money now became necessary to him. He revisited the house, and begged he might be immediately put in possession of his share of the receipts. His place of residence became known, and many left their names for him at the hotel; but even with the few whom he occasionally saw, he preserved a moody silence—to none did he speak of his misfortunes, or of his intentions.

The only person whose house he frequented, was an old bachelor, who had been a friend of the family, who was his godfather, and who had taken advantage of that sort of connexion to lecture him and to find fault with him, when he was a boy. He had always disliked him, and why he should now be the only person whose society he selected, was one of the strange and unaccountable freaks of a mind ill at ease with itself, to which the spectacle of content and cheerfulness is irksome, while it finds a kind of relief in the contemplation of another, equally joyless.

Sir Stephenson Smith had, in his youth, esteemed himself a

man of gallantry. He had never been handsome, but he had thought himself insinuating; and he had been made a fool of by many a fair one of his day. He had always professed to be on his guard against the machinations of the sex; and as he fancied, had preserved his liberty up to the present day;—that is to say, he had been by turns the tyrant and the slave of any woman who had art and vice enough to think it worth her while to dupe him. His conversation chiefly turned upon the coldness and heartlessness of women. To most others it would have been a shocking sight; but Cresford found a strange satisfaction in watching the blind and helpless old man, as he sat in his arm-chair, surrounded by all the luxuries, which to him were of no avail, and receiving, with querulous impatience, the attentions of a bustling nurse, who, through evil report and good report, whether he was cross or not, conscientiously did her duty by him, and quietly performed the offices for which she was hired.

Cresford was one day paying Sir Stephenson his diurnal visit. He had sat for some time in silence; his two hands rested upon his two knees, his eyes looked vacantly, but fixedly, into the fire, when his meditations were broken in upon by the peevish lamentations of the old man.

"There! that tiresome woman has not given me my snuff-box!" and his feeble, palsied hands strayed over the table in search of the snuff-box which was in his pocket. "She has no feeling for me! she does not care whether I am comfortable or uncomfortable, as long as she gets her money and her perquisites—that is the way of women! Talk of their kindliness! They care for nothing but themselves. They can pretend to care for one when one is young and handsome—and when one has plenty of money in one's pocket too; but I never knew one of them who had a grain of feeling! I have been a pretty fellow in my youth, and have had as many women make love to me as my neighbours, but hang me if any one of them ever loved me for myself. There is this Sarah Purbeck, she cares no more for me!—"

"What an infatuation it is," exclaimed Cresford, "which can make us worship such fickle, heartless creatures! as variable as the weathercock, which changes with every wind that blows! But that time is past—I have awoken from my day-dream—I know what their love is worth now!"

"Ay! and so do I, my boy. I never thought it worth much; and now I know it is worth—nothing at all! However, if I have not given them much of a heartache," he added, laugh-

ing a feeble, old, cracked laugh, "they have not given me much of a heartache either!"

"Do you think they are capable of loving truly and sincerely? Do you think they can love, though you and I may have lived unloved?"

"Yes; they can love themselves, and their clothes, and their opera-boxes, and, sometimes, some man they ought not to love."

Cresford bit his lips, and knit his brows, and his fist lay clenched upon the table. A long silence ensued. At length the old man fidgeted about, rang the bell, and asked for his chocolate. He struck his watch: it was five minutes past the hour. He scolded Mrs. Purbeck for her inattention, and when she left the room, he said, in a dejected tone—

"It is a sad thing to have nobody to care for one: that woman does not love me. Perhaps, after all, if I had married, I might, in a wife, have found an affectionate nurse."

"Affection!" exclaimed Cresford—"affection in a wife! Have not I a wife?—and have I met with affection?" He several times paced up and down the apartment, and then hastily took his leave.

These visits did not tend to put him in good-humour with human nature, or with womankind: they still more soured and embittered his temper; and when he had put his affairs in train, and had resumed his situation as partner, and measures had been taken for Henry Wareham's withdrawal from a concern in which he found himself frequently and painfully brought in contact with Cresford, he left London, his mind fully made up to pursue his unfortunate wife according to the rigour of the law.

He had ascertained from Mr. M'Leod that the trial would take place at the assizes of the county in which the second marriage had been celebrated, the very one in which she at present resided. He took up his abode in a neighbouring village. His first care was to obtain the certificate of his own marriage at the cathedral church of ——. He proceeded to procure that of the second marriage at Longbury, for which purpose he sent to the minister of that place a regular application for the extract from the parish register.

Mr. Allenham had no option—he was obliged to comply; but he was inexpressibly alarmed at the application, and lost no time in informing Captain Wareham of the circumstance, while Caroline wearied herself in conjectures, and hopes, and fears as to what Cresford might meditate.

This communication did not render Captain Wareham more

easy and comfortable in his mind ; and although the kindness of his heart prompted him to conceal his fears from Ellen, the additional weight of care rendered him more than usually difficult to be pleased. The Allenhams had returned to their own home soon after Ellen's arrival, and her two poor elder children having been removed, the last few weeks had been passed in melancholy quiet. Still Matilda found her task more than usually difficult, and she was so subdued herself by the misfortunes of her sister, that she had no longer the buoyancy of spirit which enabled her, half-gayly, half-resolutely, to bear up against the daily worries of her father's temper. To Ellen he never, on any occasion, spoke with captiousness ; but he often appeared annoyed with the little Agnes, who was old enough to toddle about the room, to pull away grandpapa's toast, to stumble over his foot as it was extended towards the fire, to frighten him lest she might fall against the fender, and to do the hundred things which are charming and attractive to those whose hearts are light, and who can give themselves up to watching the graceful awkwardnesses, the winning *espiégleries* of infancy, but which are inexpressibly wearisome when the mind is oppressed with deep and serious care.

Ellen saw that her child, her only remaining child, was often troublesome to her father, and she kept it out of the room as much as possible. He was then vexed that the child should not be with them, and his good-nature made him fear he might have hurt Ellen's feelings.

Cresford having obtained the two certificates, now waited upon Mr. Turnbull, a country gentleman and a magistrate, and producing the two documents, informed him that he wished to indict his wife, Ellen Cresford, for bigamy, and required him to issue a warrant for her apprehension.

Mr. Turnbull, although not personally acquainted with the parties, knew the respectability of their situations, and had heard under what circumstances the second marriage had been contracted. He attempted to dissuade Mr. Cresford from carrying matters to such an extremity ; to which Cresford sternly replied, as he had previously done to Mr. M'Leod's remonstrances, that he did not apply to him for advice, that he simply waited upon him to demand the performance of his duty as a magistrate—that the case was clearly made out before him, and he was not to counsel, but to act.

Mr. Turnbull, although he did so most unwillingly, had no choice but to grant the desired warrant. It was with a feeling of triumph that Cresford seized the paper, and, bowing to Mr.

Turnbull, abruptly quitted him, before he had time to adduce any arguments in favour of delay.

Cresford proceeded to the county-town, and delivering the warrant to the constable, desired him to perform his duty.

It so happened, that the constable to whom he addressed himself was the very Will Pollard who had once lived as gardener with Captain Wareham, and who had known Ellen from her childhood. He had inherited a little money, and had set up for himself, as nurseryman and seedsman. He stood aghast when the paper was placed in his hand, and declared in round terms, that nothing should induce him to be the bearer of such a thing, "to Miss Ellen that was."

"Take back your paper, sir! If you are for taking the law of her, sir, you must find somebody else—I'll have nothing to say to it," and he shoved the paper back to Cresford in no very civil manner.

"You cannot help yourself," Cresford replied, with an exulting calmness. "You must execute a magistrate's warrant—you cannot help yourself."

"I a'n't bound to do such a thing as this?" asked Pollard the gardener, of Simpson the shoemaker, who happened to be present.

"I don't know what right you have to refuse," answered Simpson, who was a man of wisdom, and read all the newspapers.

Pollard hesitated. He had not long been established in a concern of his own, he was new in office, and he looked up to Simpson for advice and guidance: and having scratched his head, brushed his hat with his sleeve, and pruned a thriving young shrub considerably more than it required, he said,

"Maybe if 'tis to be done, I may be able to speak kinder to her than another, and she always was partial to me from a child." So he took the paper, and held it doubtfully and distrustfully in his hand. "No," he said, again scratching his head, "I don't half-like the job; you had better get Mr. Clarke the carpenter, on the left-hand side, to do it for you, sir. He is a constable as well as me."

"Mr. Pollard, the law must have its course. You know that as well as I do. You had better take the warrant I have now given you, and bring the person therein mentioned before the magistrate, as the law directs."

"Well," said Pollard, "what must be must be, and it don't signify argufying. And when is it to be served?"

"To-day, sir! Now!" answered Cresford in a stentorian

voice. "I expect to meet you at Mr. Turnbull's with—with—the person specified in that warrant, in your custody. In three hours I shall be there."

Cresford departed, leaving poor Pollard perplexed and confounded. He went against him sadly to do what was required of him. He turned in his head how he might open the business to Miss Ellen "just easy-like, without putting her in a fluster," and in the first place he resolved to change his dress. "He wasn't no ways tidy to appear before Captain Wareham and his family. He would look clean and decent at least. He would do nothing as was not respectful by the family." So Pollard retired to repair his toilette, feeling that he thereby softened the blow which was hanging over poor Ellen.

His wife was surprised to see him in all his Sunday's best. "Why, what merry-making are you ever going to, Will?" said she: "is it your club-day?"

"No, 'tan't my club-day, woman; you know well enough that a'n't till next week?"

"Why, in the name of fortune, where are you going to, then? You are not going to Tharford fair, sure!"

"No! I a'n't going to no fair, nor no merry-making," and he stood brushing his hat round and round with the sleeve of his coat; "I am going where I have no mind to go."

"Why, Will, you quite fright me! You can't have done any thing wrong?"

"No! But I've got a warrant to sarve."

"Why, Lord bless us, this is not the first warrant you have had to sarve! But I never knew you dress yourself out so fine to sarve a warrant beforc," and Peggy smiled.

"You would not laugh if you knew who that warrant was made out for—It's for my Miss Ellen as you have heard me talk of many and many's the time. She's the one as I've often told you was as quick up the ladder as I was myself—and such a one as she was to sow seeds! and she could make cuttings almost as well as I could myself! Miss Caroline, she was always for walking in the streets, and looking out for the beaux, but Miss Ellen, she would hoe and rake for me all her play-time, if they would let her."

"A warrant for her, Will? You are dreaming."

"No, I a'n't! But hold your tongue, and mind your business. There's no good in prating—we must all do what is appointed us."

Will marched out at the door with a tear called up by his own eloquence gathering in his eye.

He proceeded to Captain Warham's. He knocked at the door.—

"If you please, James," said he, "if you please, I want to have a word with Mrs. Hamilton—that is—Mrs. Cres—Miss Ellen that was—my Miss Ellen."

"Step in, Master Pollard, I'll tell her directly."

Pollard stood twirling his hat, and debating within himself how he was to open his business, when James came back, and bade him walk up.

"Mrs. Cresford is alone—she bids us all say Mrs. Cresford now," he whispered; "she says there's no use in standing out about a name,—and yet she takes her letters every morning as if she did not half-like to touch them."

Pollard entered the room where Ellen sat, meek and dejected, with little Agnes in her lap playing at the table—she looked up with a faint smile.

"I have not seen you a long time, Pollard; I hear you are become a married man since you left my father."

"Yes, ma'am, so I am, an't please you."

"I hope you are quite comfortable; I should have been to call on you, but I have not been out lately."

"Thank you, ma'am, all the same for thinking of me. 'Twould be a pride and a pleasure to me, to show you how nice and comfortable I've got every thing about me—but—

"Speak out, Pollard; you are a very old friend: you were a great playmate of mine in my childhood. If you have any little favour to ask of me, I shall be glad to do my best, though I am not quite so rich now as I once was." Her eyes dropped, and a paler hue stole over her cheek.

"No, 't isn't that, bless your kind heart, 't isn't that. I had rather by half ask a favour of you, for I know 'twould be a pleasure to you to grant it. But I've got a bit of paper here, ma'am. You see, ma'am, I'm a constable, and they have put this upon me. They say as I must give you this here bit of paper, and I scarce know what will come of it."

Ellen received the paper from Pollard's trembling hand, while with the back of the other he brushed off a tear. She still thought some misfortune had befallen his family,—that most likely it was a petition, and it took her some moments to collect her thoughts so as to comprehend the full purport of the warrant.

The idea that she could be prosecuted for bigamy had never before crossed her imagination. The misfortune of no longer being the wife of Algernon, and the disgrace and shame of

having lived with him for two years, had completely occupied her whole soul. She had not been able to imagine any misery beyond this. No one had ever hinted at such a possibility, nor indeed had any one believed that Cresford, however keenly he might himself suffer from the consequences of his own imprudence, would have wreaked his useless vengeance upon his unfortunate wife.

Ellen was thunderstruck ! The poor constable begged her pardon, entreated her to believe it was no fault of his ; that he was bound to obey the law. "We can't help ourselves, ma'am ; we must do what the law directs,—them as have to execute the laws, and them as have to obey them,—'tis all one for us both."

Poor Ellen begged him to find her father, and to bid him come to her. She was scared, frightened. She could not be more completely separated from Algernon,—her children were already torn from her. She was, therefore, simply, vaguely frightened.

Captain Wareham came. She gave him the paper. He guessed the purport but too well, and turned deadly pale. "When is this summons to be attended, Pollard ?"

"Why, sir, Mr. Cresford said we must meet him at 'Squire Turnbull's in three hours from the time he was at my house, and that was at two o'clock, just as I had done dinner."

"Meet him ! Am I to meet Mr. Cresford ? Oh, father ! any thing but that !"

"Dearest child, there is no avoiding it. You must exert all your strength of mind : you must not give way. Mr. Turnbull is a good sort of man, and there will be no one else present. Cresford is a brute, an unmanly brute ! If you could feel half as angry with him as I do, your anger would give you strength to go through the interview."

"I am too miserable to feel angry, father. Besides, I am sorry for him :—I have made him very unhappy. I know what pain it is to be separated from what one loves, even when one knows one is loved in return. What am I to do, father ?" she meekly added.

"The sooner we get this unpleasant business over the better, my dearest child. Go and put on your things ; I will order a chaise immediately." He hurried Ellen out of the room ; he longed to be for a moment freed from her presence ; he knew that this summons was the prelude to a prosecution ; he knew that the punishment of bigamy might be transportation. Though he had no idea matters would ever be brought to such an extremity, he felt awed and nervous in the extreme, and he paced

the apartment in the greatest agitation. Pauline soon felt perplexed and grieved. "What is wrong, Pauline?" exclaimed Captain Wareham, angrily. "Can't you wait down stairs? Why do you stand here watching me?" He rang the bell violently, and ordered the hack-chaise to be instantly procured.

Captain Wareham kept no carriage. Ellen had strictly conformed to her father's mode of life: she would not concern a live in splendour upon the money Mr. Hamilton would have forced upon her.

The hack-chaise came to the door. The servant the gracious Ellen, who, as the wife of Mr. Cresford, had been used to all the luxuries of life, and as the wife of Benjamin Hamilton, to all its refinements, ascended the jingling steps, and, rushing through the straw, seated herself at the further end of the narrow seat, while the constable of the parish, mounted on the bar before, conveyed her like a common culprit before the magistrate.

CHAPTER XV.

Cosmus, Duke of Florence, had a desperate saying against persons or neglecting friends, as if those wrongs were expiation. "You shall read," saith he, "that we are commanded to forgive our enemies, but you never read that we are commanded to forgive our friends." But yet the spirit of Job was in a better time: "Shall we," said he, "take good at God's hands, and not be content to take evil men?" and so of friends in proportion. This is certain, that a man that seeks revenge keeps his own wounds green, which otherwise would heal and do well.—LORD BACON.

Redeemer, heal his heart! It is the grief
Which festers there that hath bewilder'd him.

SCOTT'S RHYME.

THE events of the morning had been so sudden and so bewildering, that Ellen scarcely comprehended what was happening. The knowledge that she was again to be brought into the presence of Cresford was the one idea that possessed her mind. "What does he want me for? What am I to say to him, father? What is this to lead to?"

"I scarcely know, my child. You have nothing to do but

to answer the truth. Your conduct has been irreproachable. You have nothing to blush for."

"Oh, how I dread meeting those eyes again! Keep close to me, father."

They arrived. Ellen, pale and trembling, was supported by her father into the hall. They were instantly shown into Mr. Turnbull's study, where he waited to receive them. He offered Ellen a seat. There was a dignity in her timidity that awed, while it excited compassion; and Mr. Turnbull, though a plain matter-of-fact man, treated her with more polite deference than usually appeared in his manner towards women.

"I believe," he said, "I must now summon Mr. Cresford, that he may go through the form of his deposition."

Ellen bowed assent, and trembled through every limb. But she kept her eyes on the ground, and moved not. Cresford entered,—she did not stir.

As he approached the table he gazed on her, though it was rather in triumph than in love; but her veil was down, her bonnet tied close, her form enveloped in a cloak. The oath was administered. Mr. Turnbull said:

"I believe, madam, you must for a moment remove your veil, that the complainant may identify you."

Ellen drew it aside, and turned on him her pale, sad face; but still she raised not her eyes. Cresford advanced a step towards the table, to take the Bible, and to swear that the prisoner was Ellen Cresford, his wife. She instinctively seized her father's arm, and sheltered herself behind him.

Cresford showed his marriage certificate. The servant who had formerly lived with him, and the clerk of ****, were present to prove the celebration of the marriage. He then produced the extract from the Longbury register.

Mr. Turnbull asked Ellen what she had to say in reply. In a faint voice she answered, "Nothing!" She had but one absorbing feeling—that of bringing this painful interview to a close. But Captain Wareham interposed.

"I cannot allow this cruel and unjust statement to be made, without simply mentioning the circumstances under which my daughter's second marriage was contracted. Mr. Cresford chose to publish an account of his own death—he chose to enact his own funeral—his friends and relations mourned him as dead. Two years and two months after the receipt of the paper containing this account of his decease, my daughter contracted a second marriage. Should any man in justice, in honour, prosecute such a case?"

"Certainly not," was Mr. Turnbull's concise reply. He looked at Cresford: "Do you wish me, sir, to proceed?—it is yet time to pause. You will no longer be at liberty to retract. If I make out the commitment, you are bound over to prosecute."

"I know it, sir! It is my intention so to do."

"Madam, my duty is a painful one, but I must proceed according to the provisions of the Act!" and Mr. Turnbull drew out the warrant of commitment; at the same time he informed the constable that he would himself attend that evening, with a brother magistrate, to admit her to bail; and that he authorized him to conduct her back to her own house, there to await his arrival, rather than at the county jail."

"Father, father! I am not to be taken to prison? Impossible! He cannot mean to bring such disgrace upon the mother of his children?"

"My dear madam, I will attend you at your own house; as the presence of two magistrates is necessary, I will bring Sir John Staples with me. Captain Wareham can then give us bail for your appearance at the ensuing assizes."

"The assizes! Oh! he cannot be in earnest! This is too, too cruel! Drag me before the eyes of the whole county! blazon our misery and our shame to the world! bring upon us the mockery of the coarse and the unfeeling mob! Oh, Charles! what have I done to deserve this?" She burst into an agony of tears.

"What have you done? Have you not blasted my happiness, broken my heart, and maddened my brain?—and she asks what she has done!" he added, turning round to those present, with a wild and fearful laugh.

Mr. Turnbull hastened to bring the scene to a close, and lost no time in leading poor Ellen back to her hack-chaise. He almost turned Cresford from the door, and instantly galloped off himself in search of Sir John Staples, to proceed with him to Captain Wareham's house, and there to admit Ellen to bail, that, at least, she might thus be spared one painful and ignominious part of what she was doomed to endure.

Ellen threw herself, sobbing and weeping, into the corner of the carriage.

"So I am to be tried, father—tried for bigamy, I suppose! Oh! have mercy, Heaven! tried like a common malefactor! placed at the bar, with all the lawyers to look at me! and the dirty mob to laugh, and bandy jests upon me! Oh! I

never, never thought of this! And must it be? Is there no escape?"

"Alas! alas! my poor Ellen, I know of none. There is no chance of bringing Cresford to reason; every attempt to do so seems but to incense him. I really think his intellects are affected,—he is scarcely in his right senses."

"I have done that!" she said, in a dejected tone. "It is not for me to be too hard upon him." After a pause of some length, she added, "And, father—the punishment?"

"Oh, my child! do not think of that! no jury on earth can find you guilty."

"But I am guilty, father!—It is true I have committed the crime! I am guilty of bigamy—though it is not my fault,"

"They will not condemn you."

"But if they should? I should like to know the worst."

"Why, under aggravated circumstances, the punishment may be transportation for seven years; but they will never pass such a sentence, so think no more of that."

"I had rather it had been death," she replied, in a quiet tone of despair. After another pause, she asked, "If I were to be transported, would that annul my marriage? Should I be free?"

"No, my love, even that would not annul your marriage."

"Perhaps it is best so. I am glad it would not: I would not mar his glorious and honourable career in his own country. It is enough to have the ruin of one fellow-creature on one's conscience." She spoke no more.

They arrived at home. In less than an hour Mr. Turnbull and Sir John Staples arrived, and with them Lord Besville, whom Mr. Turnbull also called upon, and who became bail, with Captain Wareham, for her appearance at the assizes.

The constable was dismissed. Poor Will Pollard! never had the law of the land a more unwilling assistant in its execution. When he returned to his cottage late in the evening, he threw down his hat on the table.

"Well," he muttered to himself, "this has been the worst day's job that ever I had to do. I would not have such another, no—not to be justice of the peace, and a squire to boot. Why," he exclaimed, in a louder voice, and striking his fist on the table, "why, that fellow had no more business to come back alive, after having sent word he was dead, than I have to bring in my bills twice over! Shame upon him!"

It was some time before Peggy got at the rights of the case.

"So, 'tis her second husband as is her true love. Poor soul!

Well, 'tis very hard. Why 'tis almost worse than if it was her husband's ghost come to haunt her—not that I should any ways like to see the ghost of my first lover Tom Hartrop, as was drowned off Ushant."

Peggy had been a beauty, and was rather fond of talking of her first, her second, her third, and her tenth lover. Will Pollard was in no mood to listen, and with a manner unusually surly, bade her "hold her jaw, and make haste with his supper."

It was a sorrowful evening at Captain Wareham's. Ellen retired early to rest, or rather to weep. Captain Wareham sat up late, perambulating the small drawing-room, while the measured creaking of his shoes, and periodical stamp of his foot, were heard by Ellen in her apartment above, and by Matilda in hers, as they each passed the greater part of the night in painful watching.

Ellen sat down to write to Algernon for the first time since she had quitted his roof, and resumed the name of Cresford. To him she now looked for succour. The cruelty of Cresford seemed to have widened the breach between them, and to draw her irresistibly towards one whose conduct throughout had been dictated by the very spirit of honour, generosity, and tenderness.

She detailed to him all which had that day taken place. She told him she was to be tried, publicly tried; that she must, in vindication of her own fame, produce every proof that they had received the most authentic accounts of Cresford's death. She begged him to take every means towards finding a copy of the newspaper containing the official return of the deaths at Verdun. She begged him to inquire for Colonel Eversham, and if possible to discover what had been the fate of young Maitland, to whom Cresford had intrusted the letter which was to apprise her of his plan.

"I write to you, Algernon," she continued, "because I know you will leave nothing unattempted to serve me, and to rescue me from the only one additional misery which can now be heaped upon me—that of being supposed to have sinned knowingly. Perhaps I may always have been too much alive to the opinion of the world. Perhaps one ought to be satisfied with knowing one's intentions to have been innocent, and it may be nobler to despise the idle gossip of those one neither loves nor steems; but my error, if it is one, is the safest for woman, and you, who know that I would neither see you nor correspond with you till I fancied the two years of my widowhood expired,

can alone guess what I feel at thus having my miserable history dragged before the public. I have been stunned, annihilated by the blow. The idea of such a consummation to my earthly woes never crossed my mind before. But now my one only hope is at least to prove I sincerely believed myself free when I gave myself to you, that I did not wittingly involve you in the misery which attends all in any way connected with me.

"You must secure for me the best lawyer. In short, I trust every thing to you. This will be expensive; it has not been pride, but my deference for that world before whom I am doomed to be degraded, which has hitherto prevented my allowing you to contribute to my support. I know full well that all you have might be mine; I know from my own what your feelings are, and for this cause, for the cause of my honour, I am ready to let you incur whatever expense may be necessary. I write to you at once that not a moment may be lost. The assizes are to be held the 20th of next month. If possible, discover the fate of Maitland—Adieu! I write no more—but you may communicate with my father. May Heaven preserve you to be a blessing to all who are allowed the happiness of belonging to you!

"Our child—oh, there is still one link which binds us together!—our child is well, and lovely.

"ELLEN."

Algernon, upon the receipt of this letter, was nearly frantic with rage and indignation. If Cresford longed to find himself, hand to hand, engaged with his rival, not less did Algernon burn to meet him in mortal strife; but still Cresford would have been safe with him in a desert, so closely did he cling to some distant hope of reunion with Ellen.

Though he was wild with indignation at Cresford's unmanly and cruel revenge, there was a sense of relief to him in having a definite object to pursue. He had hitherto remained in utter seclusion and inactivity. He feared to injure or to distress her by any measure he could take, and he had lived the life of an anchorite, wandering among his own woods, far from public business, useless alike to himself and to others. At length he was roused to exertion, and horrified as he was at the image of his lovely, refined, delicate, shrinking Ellen being exposed to the gaze of a public court, there was a comfort in being actively employed in her behoof. He threw himself into his carriage to fly to London, and there to begin the necessary inquiries.

He first drove to the house of the most eminent lawyer of

the day, to secure him as counsel. Cresford had been there before him. He had retained him; and although he was so engaged that he did not attend this circuit, he was effectually prevented from affording Algernon any assistance. He proceeded to another, whose name stood high as a man of overpowering eloquence, when he had justice on his side, although not perhaps equally skilled in making the worse appear the better cause. He found him free, and he was instantly retained.

He next repaired to the newspaper offices, and there having stated the date and the title of the paper of which he was in want, they gave him every hope of soon procuring it.

And now to find Colonel Eversham! He looked in the army-list. He found the name. He proceeded to the Horse Guards. He there learned that Colonel Eversham was with his regiment in Spain, having joined the army under the command of Sir John Moore. He instantly applied to the adjutant-general. He wrote to the military secretary of the commander-in-chief. He explained the case, and implored that leave of absence might be despatched to Colonel Eversham to quit his regiment, and if possible, to return to England before the 20th of the ensuing month.

The most difficult point remained. Maitland! He had no clew whereby to discover who or what Maitland was. The army-lists and navy-lists for the years 1801, 1802, 1803, were turned over and over again. No one appeared whom he could make out to have been a *détenu*.

At length he thought of applying to the Court Guide, and of personally calling at every house in London inhabited by any one of the name of Maitland. He might by chance discover whether any relative had been a *détenu*, and thus ascertain his fate.

CHAPTER XVI.

For peace is with the dead, and piety
Bringeth a patient hope to those who mourn
O'er the departed.

SOUTHEY'S RODERICK.

WITH the guide-book in his hand, Algernon proceeded in his search. It was the time of year when London was very empty, and at many houses he found the family were out of town. On

such occasions he ascertained the address of the master of the house, resolving to write his inquiries should other means fail. At one large mercantile house in the city, he found a portly old man, who said a brother of his had a natural son, who had been abroad some years ago, and was now in India, he believed; but "he had been a wild chap, and he did not rightly know what had become of him." This sounded as if he might be the person in question; but if so, the prospect was most unsatisfactory. Still Algernon was not disheartened. The next house at which he continued his inquiries was that of a widowed lady, in Upper Quebec-street. He knocked at the door. He asked for Mrs. Maitland. He was shown up-stairs into a small, two-windowed drawing-room, very tidy, very clean, and very formal. Not a chair was out of its place; the sofa was against the wall. At one side of the table, with her knitting, sat an oldish lady, very neatly dressed, and with a sweet but melancholy expression of countenance. On the other sat a younger person, evidently her daughter; but pale and faded, and decidedly past the bloom of youth. She was engaged in needlework.

They both rose on the entrance of the stranger, and the elder lady begged him to be seated, with a gentle formality, while she and her daughter resumed their seats, and mildly awaited what he had to say. Their calmness and their politeness made him experience a sensation more akin to awkwardness than was usual to a person so accustomed to the world, and so gifted with a prepossessing manner. Moreover, a sort of intuitive conviction came over him, that he spoke to a widow who had lost her son, whether or no she might be the parent of him of whom he was in search.

It was with a certain degree of hesitation that he opened his story, and explained, that for reasons which were of the most vital importance to himself and others in whom he was deeply interested, he was anxious to know what had become of a young Mr. Maitland, who had been a *détenu* at Verdun, and had effected his escape thence in the beginning of the year 1804. He saw the daughter look anxiously at the mother, and drop her work. He saw the mother's hands shake as she knitted two or three more stitches before she spoke.

His kind heart grieved for the pain he had evidently given, but yet he felt a throb of pleasure as he hoped he had succeeded in discovering the object of his search. Mrs. Maitland laid down her knitting, and taking off her spectacles, replied in a calm voice,—

"My only son was a *détenu*, sir, and he never returned to me. He was lost in an open boat off the coast between Antwerp and Bruges."

The mother slightly clasped her two hands, as they fell quietly on her knee, in the attitude of a person who is meek, and resigned, and accustomed to her sorrow.

He turned to the daughter.

"It gives me infinite pain, madam, to continue to ask questions upon a subject which must be so trying to your mother's feelings, but if you knew how much the peace and respectability of the person on earth most dear to me is implicated in the replies to my questions, you would pardon me for persisting."

He then briefly stated his and Ellen's story to Mrs. and Miss Maitland. They listened with kindness and attention, and told him in return that young Maitland had been travelling in France for pleasure, and to see the world; that in a year he would have been of age, when he would have come into a large property which was strictly entailed upon him. That he would then have placed his mother and sister in a situation of comfort and affluence. But the war broke out. He became a *détenu*. She said that he had often mentioned Mr. Cresford's name in his letters, and had alluded to the impatience with which he bore his imprisonment. That they had never heard from him, from the time of his making his escape, but that from all they could learn, he had reached Bruges in safety. That he had there waited for some time in hopes of being able to row to some English vessels which were cruising off the coast. That at length he and some companions had one night made a desperate attempt to do so. But the weather was too tempestuous for the small fishing-boat which they had succeeded in unmooring from the shore, especially as it was manned by young men who were not accustomed to the perils of the sea. That only two out of the five had survived, having been picked up by the English vessels when the daylight dawned.

The young man having thus perished before he came of age, the mother and sister had continued to live in poverty and seclusion. Care had long since impaired the bloom of his sister, who it seems was some years older than the youth, who had been the hope, the joy, the darling of them both.

The parties had become mutually interested for each other, and Hamilton easily obtained from them a promise of committing to paper their statement of young Maitland's death, and allowing it to be produced upon the trial. If possible, he would

spare them the unpleasantness of being subpoenaed to appear in person.

They parted in kindness, and Algernon returned home, anxiously expecting his answer from the Horse Guards. He was informed that Colonel Eversham's leave would be granted; that he should be allowed to return to attend at the assizes, and wind and weather permitting, there was every prospect he would arrive in time. He despatched a letter to Colonel Eversham to inform him of the purpose for which his presence was so necessary, and entreated him to use all diligence in reaching England.

In the course of time, the newspaper was found which contained the account of Cresford's death, and Algernon felt some satisfaction in reflecting that every thing was now in a fair way to clear his Ellen from any suspicion, or shade of blame. He obeyed her injunctions by communicating only with Captain Wareham. His whole soul was bent as devotedly as hers could be, to the object of making her innocence shine forth untarnished.

The report of the trial which was to take place soon became public, and excited the greatest sensation and interest in the whole neighbourhood. Every one felt for Ellen, and all were anxious to prove their pity and personal respect for her. Captain Wareham's humble door was literally besieged with carriages and inquirers. Every one of any note in the vicinity left their names, as a sort of homage to her character.

Lord Besville, who had so kindly come forward at the first moment, offered his carriage to conduct her to the court when the awful day arrived, and his offer was accepted with thankfulness.

These tokens of approbation, and the support of all around, were some consolation to poor Ellen. She hated notoriety; she had rather have retired into obscurity, and, hoping that her fate was unnoticed and undiscussed, have hid her head in peace and humility: but, if she must be brought before the world, these testimonies of the esteem of her friends and neighbours in some measure soothed her feelings. People are seldom so wretched that the proofs of sympathy in their fellow-creatures are not agreeable to them. The list of the inquirers is read with interest and gratification, by the sick, and by the mourner. No feeling is more bitter than that your sufferings, whether mental or bodily, are uncared for.

Ellen had written her wishes to Algernon. She knew that every measure which human zeal and foresight could pursue

to clear her fame would be adopted: upon that subject, therefore, she rested in security, and she passed her time in schooling her mind to bear the worst, and seeking strength and assistance from the one only unailing source of consolation, under misfortunes such as hers.

She believed her father, when he told her it was next to impossible that, supposing the sentence of transportation should pass, it would be carried into execution; and yet she thought it would be wiser to accustom her mind in some degree to such a possibility, than to allow herself to be so completely taken by surprise as she had been, when first the idea of undergoing a trial had opened upon her. Visions of the hulks, of foreign lands, of being associated with horrible criminals, a thousand half-defined, ill-understood horrors would visit her. In her dreams she fancied herself torn from her remaining child, a stranger and an outcast, at Botany Bay, and though, when she awoke, and shook off the images conjured up by sleep, she assured herself that such a result was most improbable, she could not be certain that such was impossible. She knew not what further evidence Cresford might adduce of his having duly warned her of his intentions: her proofs were all negative; and sometimes the anticipations of what might be her future fate were so appalling, that her ardent desire to exercise the virtue of resignation, and her fear of increasing the misery of others, were not strong enough to save her from paroxysms of terror and despondency.

Mrs. Allenham had, upon the first intelligence of what was to take place, hastened to her sister. Captain Wareham was so full of care, and so unhappy, that he rejoiced in the presence of some one who should spare him the task of giving hopes, which from the despondency of his own nature he was far from feeling. Ellen would weep by the hour together, with the sympathizing Caroline, who, as usual, was all kindness and gentleness. Matilda, who was younger, and scarcely able to enter into the full and complicated miseries of the case, attempted to inspire Ellen with a proud feeling of disdain for her unjust accusations, and a confident expectation of an honourable acquittal. The three sisters were one day sitting together, and Ellen was bidding Caroline watch tenderly over her little Agnes if their worst anticipations should be fulfilled, when Caroline could not help saying—

“But, Ellen, if you really believe there is a chance of any thing so dreadful, I almost think, if I were you, I would fly the

country with Mr. Hamilton, and your child. You were married to him too, after all."

"Caroline, I resisted Algernon when he pleaded. If Algernon's voice, if Algernon's fair beseeching countenance, if Algernon's eyes, failed to persuade me, fear will not! No; my fair fame shall be tarnished by no wilful act of my own."

"That is right, Ellen!" exclaimed Matilda; "I would die sooner! Respected as you are by everybody now, I would die sooner than be looked down upon!"

"Well, you are quite right; it was very wrong in me to have thought of such a thing. And I, a clergyman's wife too! But, I am afraid, if Mr. Allenham was to try and persuade me, I should not be so firm as you are."

"But he is your husband, Caroline."

"Yes, quite true; and then if he said it, it must be right, whatever it might be."

Time stole away. Hamilton watched with anxious eyes the vane of the neighbouring church, the smoke of each chimney of the houses opposite. He had arranged every thing with Ellen's counsel, and a fortnight before the day fixed for the trial he went to Falmouth, there to look out for the arrival of every packet, every transport, every fishing-vessel, that he might be sure not to miss Colonel Eversham.

The wind had been favourable for conveying the despatches which contained Colonel Eversham's leave of absence, but it continued in the east long after Algernon had wished it to veer round. Steam-vessels were not then in use, and every thing depended on the elements.

The morning of the 18th arrived. Colonel Eversham had not yet appeared—Algernon was in despair—but leaving his servant to watch for him, he could no longer remain absent from the spot where his beloved Ellen's fate was to be decided, and he hastened to ——. On the evening of the 19th he had an interview with Captain Wareham, and was obliged to tell him that Eversham had not yet landed, but that he had Mrs. Maitland's account of her son's death, and that their counsel was confident of success. Mrs. Maitland was in the town, that in case her statement was not considered sufficient, she, if necessary, might be called into court.

Hamilton was so painfully interested, and so occupied with business, that it was not till the busy streets were quiet, the tumult of the well-filled hotel hushed, and midnight approaching, that he had time to reflect how short a space divided him from Ellen and from his child.

How his heart yearned towards them! how he longed to be allowed to see them! but he determined to do nothing till the eventful morrow was past. His counsel should be able to aver, with truth, that they had never met from the time they heard that Cresford was living. He would not even indulge himself by walking before the house, and looking at the exterior of the dwelling which contained his soul's treasures, lest any one might recognise him, and might fancy he had visited her clandestinely. He passed the night, however, in restless sleeplessness. He sat at the window of his bedroom, and having thrown open the sash, he gazed upon the clear, deep blue, quiet heavens; the busy hum of men had subsided; the streets were deserted; the lights one by one had been extinguished; not a sound was to be heard but the monotonous call of the watchman, pacing his rounds. A gentle breeze just whispered through the poplar-trees of a neighbouring garden, and brought with it the refreshing smell which the dews of evening extract from them. It was a season for gentle and holy musings.

"And yet," he reflected, "how many beings are now enduring the utmost pangs of human anxiety! The culprits in the jail—their relatives—my poor Ellen—her father, and myself—Cresford too—the wretch whose very name makes my blood boil; he, even he must suffer! He must feel remorse, repentance—he must have been hurried into this act of unreasonable, useless cruelty, by a sudden impulse of passion. I pity the unfortunate man! Yes, I pity him—for he has lost her! Is not that enough to madden him? Oh! what will the morrow bring to us all? What will be our fate?" His eyes glanced to the heavens; "Whatsoever may be our fates on earth, that placid heaven, those innumerable stars, those signs of omnipotence, speak to us of another world, in which happiness must assuredly be my Ellen's portion, and where I may humbly hope to share in that heavenly joy, which we cannot conceive nor comprehend, but in the truth of which we may firmly place our trust!"

Ellen, meanwhile, was in some measure spared the overwhelming anxiety of that night, by another source of disquiet. Agnes was feverish and unwell: perhaps it was a fortunate occurrence for her that such was the case; under any circumstances she could not have slept. While sitting by the sick bed of her little girl, her thoughts were drawn away from her own miseries; and when, at length, the child dropped off into a calm and easy sleep, the sense of relief almost resembled joy. But to this succeeded the dreadful thought,—

“If I should be torn from her! If this should be my last night of watching over her! If she should be worse to-morrow, and I far away! Imprisoned! alone! and my sick child away from me! It is possible—very possible! and I shall survive this; for I have survived being torn from Algernon, and from my poor George and Caroline!”

CHAPTER XVII.

For thyself
Thou hast had thy fill of vengeance, and perhaps
The cup was sweet; but it hath left behind
A bitter relish. SOUTHEY'S RODERICK.

LITTLE Agnes was better in the morning. Ellen's name was not the first on the list; a common case of burglary was nearly disposed of when she was summoned.

Lord Besville's carriage, as previously arranged, conveyed her to the court-house. The curious mob gave way, with an expression of pity, as Ellen, assisted by her father, and by Lord Besville, and accompanied by Mr. Turnbull, alighted from the carriage. She was supported through the crowd of black, shabby-genteel, greasy-looking attendants, who are to be found about the purlieus of a court of justice. She had to wait some minutes in the passage, till the thief who had preceded her at the bar was removed. She was then led in, and placed where he had stood.

There was a universal whisper and commotion throughout the assembly, as her graceful form took the place of the coarse, vulgar, brutal figures which had usually occupied that spot.

A silence of a moment succeeded. She held by the iron bar before her, as if to sustain herself. A request for a chair was heard from every quarter, and in a few seconds she was enabled to seat herself. There was another pause—Mr. Cresford's lawyer then rose. He felt he had the sense of the court against him—that all instinctive and human feelings must be in favour of the delicate and shrinking creature before them.

She sat shrouded in a wrapping black cloak, her face concealed by a close bonnet and a thick veil. Scarcely any thing

was visible except the slender, rounded, swan-like throat, and one white hand which occasionally clutched the iron bar.

Though one of the ablest men in his profession, he had scarcely his usual self-possession when he began; but he soon warmed with his subject. The fact of bigamy was clearly to be proved; and he expatiated upon the feelings of the adoring and deserted husband, and made use of the very interest excited by her appearance, as an argument for the sympathy he deserved, an enhancement of the injury received.

Hamilton had, unobserved, crept into a retired corner. He had heard the eloquent appeal. Accustomed to read the effect produced upon his fellow-creatures by public speaking, he had perceived that the able counsel had affected his audience; that in truth the very interest excited by Ellen did tell against her. He could not bear the situation any longer. He rushed into the street, and paced it up and down in agonized perturbation. He longed to madness that Colonel Eversham should arrive. His evidence was material. He had continued to hope against all reason that he would appear, and he now felt ready to accuse him and the government, the winds and the waves, of cruelty.

At the close of the case for the prosecution, Ellen for the first time raised her eyes, and saw the large round green table, surrounded by the youthful faces of the lawyers in their powdered wigs. She took one fearful glance at their countenances, to see if, accustomed as they were to make their harvest of the woes and the crimes of their fellow-men, there might not be a lurking expression of levity or mirth among them. She ventured one look at the judge. He was a firm, but a venerable and mild-looking man; and she hoped for justice, tempered with mercy, at his hands. One other look towards the jury. She thought she recognised some faces she remembered in her youth.

"Ah! they will have pity on me," she thought.

The certificates of the two marriages had been produced—the witnesses were called. At this moment a voice was heard in a loud whisper, addressing one of the counsel,

"Colonel Eversham is come!"

Ellen looked up. She saw on the right of the judge's seat, at the door by which the lawyers, the high sheriff, &c. had free ingress and egress, Algernon's eager beaming face!

It was the first time she had seen it since they had parted at Bellhanger. She gave a faint scream, and uttering his name, fell back in her chair. The assistants, who were near at hand,

quickly lifted up her veil; they took off her bonnet, and in their awkward attentions they loosened her comb, and her long black hair fell in showers around her. The marble brow, the fringed lids, the pencilled eyebrows, the oval face, the graceful form, caused a sensation of enthusiastic admiration and pity, and tears fell fast from the eyes of the few ladies who had had nerves to attend the trial. They handed smelling-bottles, and drops, and in a few moments she revived. Her father was close at hand, and he supported her drooping head, while the tear-drops coursed one another rapidly down his pallid cheeks.

Cresford stood apart, stern and immovable. He had seen the cause of her agitation; he had watched the direction of her eye, and the fiend of jealousy possessed his soul, and scared every softer emotion.

The case for the prosecution was quickly closed. Ellen's counsel rose, relieved by finding there was no further evidence produced against his client than what he was fully prepared to meet, and inspired by the comfortable assurance that Colonel Eversham was at hand.

Of course he did not attempt to disprove the fact of the two marriages; but in a clear and circumstantial manner, he stated the events with which the reader is already well acquainted, and wound up the whole with so touching a description of the sufferings and virtues of the "exemplary lady then writhing under the unmerited disgrace of being placed in the situation in which they beheld her," that most people present agreed with Will Pollard, that Cresford had no business to be alive. Making a forcible appeal to their feelings, he continued:—

"And when we contemplate such unmerited sufferings, does not every thing that is human in us array itself in her defence? Do we not feel ourselves rather called upon to minister relief, than to inflict punishment? Good God, gentlemen, when we see this blameless lady, the victim of an imposture (for although perhaps an excusable one, still it was an imposture, an enacted lie),—when we find her, in consequence of this imposture, deprived of the name to which she was an honour, of the station in society of which she was so bright an ornament,—when we see her torn from her children, and her children bereft of a mother's watchful care,—when we see her thus doubly widowed, severed from the man to whom in innocence and purity of thought she had given her affections at the altar,—from the man who so well deserves, and still possesses those affections, of which, gentlemen, we have even now witnessed such affecting evidence,—can we, can we, I say, contemplate such accu-

mulation of unprecedented distress, and call it guilt? Forbid it, reason! Forbid it, justice! Forbid it, truth! And what, in her sorrows, her privations, her bereavement, what does this injured lady ask? But to live in virtuous singleness and seclusion—to devote her days to her aged father, to her innocent child—the babe from whose bed of sickness she has this day been dragged before you.”

But one feeling prevailed throughout the court. Captain Wareham, Hamilton, Henry Wareham, all felt confident of the result. Every thing that had been stated in favour of Ellen was amply borne out by the newspaper, the account of Maitland's death, and the evidence of Colonel Eversham, who distinctly detailed each particular concerning the supposed death of Cresford, and also declared he had reported every detail to Mrs. Cresford upon his own return to England, which he effected a short time afterward.

The judge clearly and concisely summed up the evidence, and told the jury it was for them to decide whether the prisoner was or was not guilty of the crime with which she was charged.

The jury retired for a few minutes. To Ellen they appeared an age. The whispered hopes and consolations of those around fell on her ear without entering into her mind. She had suffered so much that she durst not give way to hope.

The jury could not do otherwise than bring in the verdict “guilty” of the crime, though at the same time they recommended the prisoner to mercy. She heard but the first word. A mist came over her eyes, a rushing noise sounded in her ears; she fainted before she had time to hear the sentence of the judge.

He premised that bigamy came under the head of felony, which, by the statute 35th of George III., rendered persons liable to the same punishments, pains, and penalties as those who are convicted of grand or petit larceny. Under aggravated circumstances, therefore, the punishment might be transportation for seven years; but under those of the present case, he commanded the prisoner to be fined one shilling, and to be forthwith discharged.

Though unseen himself, Hamilton's eyes had been riveted upon her. He instantly darted to her side when he saw her fall. The impulse was uncontrollable. The sentence had passed, and before he had time to think, to feel, to reflect, to calculate, he had taken her from Captain Wareham's trembling arms, and had carried her into the lobby. She was still insen-

sible, but he supported that beloved form, and that moment was one of rapture!

She faintly opened her eyes, and it was from his voice that she first heard, "You are free, Ellen, you are free!"

"Free?" and she gazed wildly around her. "Free from him? May I become lawfully your wife?"

Her scattered senses were not yet collected—she scarcely knew what had passed, or where she was. The words "you are free" sounded in her ear as if the fatal tie was dissolved. He had not the courage to undeceive her, while under this impression she leaned weakly and trustingly on his arm.

Captain Wareham was preparing to explain the meaning of his words, when Cresford rushed forward. His eyes flashed fire, and hastily pushing aside all around, he forced his way by her father, he seized her helpless form, and sternly fixing his hand against Algernon's breast, he forcibly repelled him.

"The law of the land has just pronounced this woman to be my wife, and you—her paramour."

"Unmanly wretch!" and Hamilton's dark eye flashed on him with as infuriated a glance as his own, his lip quivered with rage, but he restrained himself. "Say what you will—insult me—strike me—to me you are sacred." Hamilton drew himself up to his full height, and looked with proud contempt upon Cresford.

Ellen had strength enough to struggle from Cresford's grasp, and to fling herself into her father's arms, who implored him to have pity upon his poor worn-out child, and not to make her the subject of a common brawl, in the public sight.

Angry as Cresford was, he felt that he was only exposing himself to the ridicule, as well as to the blame of all around, and turning to Captain Wareham, he said,

"In your hands—in the hands of her father I am content to leave her. But I owe it to myself that she should be preserved from one who is avowedly nothing to her. I trust my wife's honour in your hands, Captain Wareham. When I have seen you and your daughter safely placed in the carriage, which awaits you, I shall depart."

Sternly folding his arms, and placing himself between Hamilton and Ellen, he watched them into Lord Besville's carriage.

Hamilton, ever fearful of adding to Ellen's sufferings, commanded himself, restrained his feelings, and saw her dear form depart, without making a movement to follow or to assist. When the carriage had driven away, Cresford and Hamilton,

for one short minute, gazed fixedly on each other; each seemed to wish to look the other dead, but neither spoke. Cresford was not so deprived of all sense of reason and honour, as further to insult a man who would not raise his hand against him. Hamilton still maintained his resolution that no provocation should urge him to place an impassable barrier between himself and Ellen.

Each turned on his heel and walked away, with a storm of turbulent and angry passions raging in his bosom. They returned to their respective hotels.

Did Cresford feel the happier for having accomplished his revenge? No! he only felt, if possible, more injured, more miserable than ever. It is true, he had increased the wretchedness of Ellen, but had that afforded his own any alleviation? He had merely given her the occasion of proving how innocently she had contracted her second marriage, and how exemplary had been her conduct, how conscientious and considerate that of his rival, since they had discovered that he was still in existence. He had merely given the world an opportunity of knowing how little share he had in her affections, how dear to her was Hamilton.

Algernon's mind was scarcely less agitated. The sight of Ellen had distracted him. How were they to drag on their weary lives in hopeless absence? The blank and cheerless prospect before them never struck him so forcibly as now. The excitement of the last six weeks had kept up his spirits. There was something to be done, something to look to, something to hope, something to fear. He felt it impossible to seek again his solitary home; impossible to pursue any regular fixed course of life, to which there seemed no period, no end, except in the grave. His child, too, his only child was ill. He had a father's longing to see it; he knew not what to do, or how to act. He would not expose Ellen to another outbreak of Cresford's passion, and he at length made up his mind, that if the next day his child was going on well, he would leave the neighbourhood; but that, when Cresford had also departed, he would arrange with Captain Warcham that he should occasionally see his little Agnes.

Poor Ellen had reached her home. Exhausted by the overwhelming emotions of the day, she had scarcely feeling left to comprehend any thing beyond being restored to her child. Caroline, to whose care she had committed her, and Matilda, whom her father had not allowed to attend the trial, received her in their arms, and almost carried her to her child's bedside.

Little Agnes was better, and Ellen sat close by her, with a vague feeling of gratitude to Heaven for reuniting them. They persuaded her to lay herself on the bed by her side, and in a very few moments she was wrapped in slumber, as calm, as placid as the child's.

It was late in the evening before she awoke. Caroline and Matilda were both in the room. She started up. "Is it over?" she cried; "is the trial over? or did I only dream it?"

"It is over, all well over, dearest sister, and you are restored to us."

"Thank you, dear creatures. And my child, she is better; she is sleeping nicely, and quite close to me. Oh, the relief of finding myself among you all, without the fear of those dreadful hulks! Where is my father, my poor father? He has gone through a great deal to-day."

"He has just stolen out of the room. He has been here, looking at you and Agnes, as you both slept, till the tears streamed down his face."

"Oh, let me go to him!" She hastened down-stairs, and poor Captain Wareham felt almost happy when he saw a smile, though it was a troubled and an unquiet one, upon Ellen's lips.

"Oh, father, I scarcely thought I should ever again feel any thing so near akin to joy as this. If you knew how the horrible idea of transportation preyed upon my mind! I did not like to own how much I thought of it. At least, I can look round and feel that from all of *you* I need not now be parted. Yet mixed with this sensation of joy, which is so strange to me, there comes such a yearning for George and Caroline, my poor dear children, whom I must not see. Oh! if I could kiss them once, if I could look upon them, if I could know they were well! My poor dear innocent children!" She sat down and wept freely, weakly, gently, as a person utterly worn out, body and mind.

Latterly, she had not spoken much of her elder children; her mind had been bent to the one point, and the fear of another still more dreadful misfortune had prevented her dwelling so much on their absence. But now that her heart, for the first time, gave way to this unwonted feeling of happiness, she longed for their presence with a passionate desire.

She breathed not Algernon's name. But when they all retired to rest, and she found herself alone in her chamber, she seated herself in an arm-chair, and covering her eyes with her hands, she yielded herself up to a sort of dreamy but delightful con-

sciousness that she had seen him, heard him ; that her eye had met his, that her head had rested on his shoulder, that his voice had sounded in her ear. She dreaded to move, and to rouse herself to the sad prospect that she was to see him no more—that days, months, years must roll on, and she must meet those eyes and hear that voice no more !

But this weakness was not to be indulged ; she shook it off, and calmed and refreshed her soul with humble and grateful prayer.

CHAPTER XVIII.

*Cher petiot, bel amy, tendre fils que j'adore,
Cher enfanton, mon soulcy, mon amour,
Te voy, mon fils, te voy, et veux te voir encore,
Pour ce trop brief me semblent nuit et jour.*

CLÉOTILDE DE SUUVILLE, 13TH CENTURY.

THE next morning Captain Wareham, at Ellen's request, wrote a note to Algernon, to tell him she was well, and that little Agnes was rapidly recovering, and also to assure him that Ellen's mind was comparatively at ease. In his answer to Captain Wareham he told him, that having heard so satisfactory an account of those in whose welfare his every feeling was centred, he should quit * * *, as he feared his presence in the town might occasion Cresford's also remaining there, in jealous irritation ; but that he trusted, when every thing was quiet, and Cresford (as he flattered himself he would) had resumed his habits of business, he might be allowed to visit his child ; that he likewise claimed some pity, and that a father's heart yearned towards his only child. He said no more. He wished to accustom her to the idea that he must, that he ought to see Agnes, and he hoped by degrees to persuade Ellen to allow him an interview herself.

Cresford, as Hamilton had anticipated, left * * * when he had ascertained his rival's departure, and he returned to London. He then entered with ardour into the concerns of the house—peremptorily insisted upon the speedy adjustment of the affairs, which had been rendered perplexed by his return, and resolved that he would make himself a name as the first and greatest of English merchants. If, in private life, he stood

in the contemptible position of the discarded, the deserted husband, in the world he would be respected as one of the most leading men in the city. But his mind, weakened, excited, and unsettled by what he had undergone, was not equal to accomplishing all he undertook. His schemes were wild and visionary, and neither added to the stability nor to the consideration of the house.

Henry Wareham, who had lost no time in withdrawing himself, had found little difficulty in gaining admittance into another establishment of equal, if not greater note: his capital, which, though not large, had increased during the time he had formed one in the Cresford partnership, his character for steadiness and industry, and his clear practical head, making him an acquisition in any concern, while the cause of his retirement from his present business excited an interest in his favour.

'There is no want of generous and kind feeling in this country. A case of undeserved misfortune, if once known and understood, rarely fails to create friends and protectors.

Ellen's ardent desire to see her elder children increased, rather than diminished, with time. The savage wildness of Cresford's eye and manner filled her with uneasiness for their fate. Henry had ascertained that he had taken for them a small house at Brompton, and that he visited them once or twice a week. The *bonne* whom she had placed about them she knew to be a good creature, although not possessed of much information, nor by any means the person to whom she would willingly have intrusted the complete guidance of their minds and characters. Still she was grateful that he left them under her care, and she rejoiced that he did not habitually live with them, and that consequently they were not exposed to the starts of passion which, even in better days, had been formidable.

She thought if she could once see them, unknown to themselves,—merely see them as they passed by, and ascertain that they looked healthy and happy, that she should feel more contented.

She opened this idea one day to Captain Wareham, who treated it as fanciful and romantic. The irritability of temper which, during the time of great and serious distress completely subsided, had gradually again grown into a habit. He was too old to alter, and although his heart was most kind, his feelings for Ellen tender, yet in the every-day intercourse of life she could not avoid sometimes perceiving that she brought much trouble and discomfort upon him, in the decline of life.

She proposed a visit to Caroline and to Mr. Allenham, who

had urged her completing the cure of little Agnes by trying change of air. She knew that the kind-hearted Caroline would willingly agree to any plan which might promise her a moment's comfort, and if Mr. Allenham would give his consent, she could not have more respectable sanction and assistance.

Caroline, as she expected, was all good-nature, nor did Mr. Allenham disapprove of the idea. He saw that she was in so restless a state, that she was so possessed with the notion that if her children were sick, she would not be apprized of their illness, that they might be dying, and she remain in ignorance,—that he really thought it desirable her mind should be relieved upon this subject. One thing he premised,—that she should not make herself known to them. If it ever came to Cressford's ears, he might secrete them where she would have no means of hearing or knowing about them; and at all events, it would be wrong to excite curiosity, useless regrets, or premature sensibilities in the children; still more so to accustom them to mystery and concealment. She saw the reason of his arguments: all she begged was to be allowed to disguise herself in the dress of a common maid-servant, and to walk in the street near which they lived, till she could once see them pass along, healthy and cheerful.

In compliance with her wishes, they all three repaired to London. Ellen and Caroline dressed themselves in the most homely apparel, and Ellen solemnly promised Mr. Allenham to do nothing which might cause herself to be recognised. They entered a shop nearly opposite the dwelling which contained her children. Mrs. Allenham busied herself bargaining for threads, tapes, and ribands, while Ellen stood near the door, half out of sight, watching with a palpitating heart, and eyes which were almost blinded with intense gazing, the windows, the doors of the house.

After some time the sash was thrown up, and she saw her own little Caroline run into the balcony. The child looked well and blooming; her fair hair hanging down her back in glossy ringlets, her laughing eyes sparkling with gayety, her cheeks glowing with health! Those ringlets which she had so often fondly twisted through her fingers, those eyes she had so often kissed, those cheeks which had so often been pillowed to rest upon her bosom!

She had pledged herself to do nothing to attract attention,—and she kept her word. But a fearful chill ran through her. Where was George? Why was not he playing with his sister? Was he ill? She could no longer watch every graceful move-

VOL. I.—L

ment of Caroline, so agonizingly did she look for her boy. George, the playful, the high-spirited George, what could keep him within? The suspense was almost too much to endure without betraying herself. She had nearly made up her mind to ask the shop-people, in as unconcerned a tone as she could command, whether they had lately seen the little boy who lived opposite. She had approached Mrs. Allenham, and had grasped her arm in almost speechless tremor, when she saw George appear for one moment at the window, and beckon his sister in. She breathed again, and seating herself for a few moments, recovered her self-possession. Mrs. Allenham had turned round with an anxious look of inquiry.

"It is nothing," whispered Ellen; "it is all right now!"

"Are you ready to go," rejoined Caroline.

"Yes—oh, no, wait a few minutes longer." She returned to the door to look once more. All was quiet—no one was to be seen at the window. At length Caroline could devise no fresh articles to purchase, and they left the shop. At that moment the door opened, and bounding down the steps, she saw both children with rosy cheeks, and active forms, and radiant faces.

She stopped, trembling, and gazed till they were out of sight. They passed on, unconscious and contented, each holding a hand of the good old *bonne*, and jumping as they went with the light-hearted merriment of childhood. She faithfully made no sign nor movement that should attract attention, and turned her steps towards their temporary domicile, satisfied and relieved; but, such is the inconsistency of the human heart, that, anxious as she was to know them happy, a painful feeling shot through her to think how joyous they were without her. While she—yet she wished them to be joyous, though it was bitter to think her children should grow up without any love for her, any recollection of her.

If such thoughts did cross her mind, they found not utterance in words. She professed herself satisfied, and they returned to Longbury. She loved Longbury; it was there she had first seen Algernon. It was there he had first breathed his vows of love; it was there she had, as she then fancied, bound herself to him by ties which death only was to sever.

Since the trial, Cresford insisted upon her receiving alimony from him. It was painful to her to do so; but he would have been furious at the idea of her being beholden to Hamilton. Her father, though he had the will, had not the means of supporting her; and feeling also that her miseries tended rather to depress him, and to throw a gloom over the youth of Matilda, she

retired to a very small cottage in the outskirts of the town, and there resided in the deepest retirement, seeking consolation in the performance of the few duties which remained to her to fulfil,—devotion to her child, and attention to the poor around her; her only amusement the cultivation of her tiny flower-garden.

The neighbouring peasants soon learned to look upon her as their friend, and applied to her in all cases of distress. She had heard Algernon's opinions upon the mischief produced by indiscriminate charity, and she tried so to regulate hers as not to reward the idle and complaining, while the frugal, industrious, and contented were unnoticed and unassisted. She felt, while making this her study, that she was in some measure executing his wishes. How well she succeeded in doing real good is another question. The task is one of great difficulty; but she succeeded in making herself loved by all the best of her poor neighbours, though she might occasionally be imposed upon by some of the worst.

Her gentle words, her good advice, her attempts to convert the wicked, and to console the suffering, could do no harm, even when they failed of effecting good.

CHAPTER XIX.

Las ! Si j'avois pouvoir d'oublier
 Sa beauté, sa beauté, son bien dire,
 Et son tant doux, tant doux regarder,
 F'iniroit mon martire.
 Mais, Las ! Mon cœur je n'en puis ôter ;
 Et grand affollage
 M'est d'espérer,
 Mais tel servage
 Donne courage
 A tout endurer.
 Et puis comment, comment oublier
 Sa beauté, sa beauté, son bien dire,
 Et son tant doux, tant doux regarder ?
 Mieux aime mon martire.

Complainte à la Reine Blanche, par Thibault.

SOME months had now elapsed. Algernon ventured to write to Ellen herself, describing to her his life of loneliness. He assured her that if he might look forward to the prospect of seeing her and his child at stated periods, however rare, however distant, he might again be able to exert himself, and strive to be an active and a useful member of society. That at present his existence appeared so aimless, so hopeless, that he could not rouse himself to attend to public any more than to private affairs.

These arguments were to her irresistible. She knew too well what were the yearnings of a parent for his child, and she would not inflict upon Algernon what she herself endured.

His fame too ! His position in the world ! His utility to his fellow-creatures ! Her pride in his fame was second only to her love for himself, and though she would not have consented to that which was wrong in itself, even for his sake, she thought she might promise to see him once in every six months, and in the presence of her father, without compromising herself.

Having consulted Captain Wareham, and obtained his consent to this plan, she wrote Algernon word that she agreed to his proposition, but that he must give her due warning of his coming, and that she would not see him except in the presence of her father. That she would meet him as a dear and valued friend, but they must not indulge in vain repinings, or in useless or sinful hopes.

Her letter was calm ; it cost her much to make it so—but it was calm.

Such as it was, it infused new life into Algernon. He doubted not her love. He respected her scruples. He was so happy at having gained that much that he did not quarrel with the measured style. He should see her again ! He should again hear the music of her voice ! And his eye beamed once more with hope—he moved with a more elastic step.

The very servants observed the altered aspect of their master, and Mrs. Topham remarked, as he walked by the windows of the housekeeper's room to the stables, that she "had not heard her master tread so light and quick since her poor mistress went away ;" she wondered "what ever had come to him !"

He appointed the day following that on which Ellen should receive his answer—the hour one o'clock. And meanwhile he was in a restless state of joyful expectancy, which allowed him to fix his mind to nothing.

He thought a hack-chaise was the most unobtrusive mode of conveyance, and that which was least likely to excite observation, and he departed on his journey alone.

With what feelings did Ellen await his arrival ! She strove to preserve the even composure of her mind, but in vain !

"Algernon will find me sadly altered," she thought, as she arranged her dress with more attention to what was becoming than she had done for many months. "This mode of dressing my hair makes me look ten years older, and my cheeks are grown so thin !" She checked herself for the vain thought—"What business have I to wish to look well in his eyes now ? I ought not to think of such things." But we will not pledge ourselves that she might not pass rather more time at the toilet that morning than she had usually done ; perhaps she was almost sorry she had adopted the habit of wearing her hair smoothly parted on her brow, instead of in the luxuriant ringlets which used to fall in showers on her cheeks. Yet had she nothing to regret. The touching, holy, Madonna-like expression of her countenance at present fully compensated for what she might have lost in brilliancy.

To Agnes's appearance, however, she devoted herself without any fear of doing wrong, and the blooming little creature amply repaid her cares. She was now able to lisp a few words, and Ellen had taught her to say papa, and bade her be sure so to call the gentleman who was coming, as soon as she saw him. Captain Wareham had walked down early to Ellen's

cottage, and they remained waiting in perturbed expectation. Ellen felt confused. Her situation was so strange—so new. There was no precedent by which to shape her conduct. But she had the best of guides—her guileless heart, her innate purity.

Exactly as the clock struck one, a post-chaise drove to the door. In one second Algernon sprang from it; in another, he was in the drawing-room.

Ellen's heart beat till she thought her bosom would burst. Algernon rushed towards her—but she extended her hand to him before he approached her, and he merely pressed it to his lips in speechless agitation.

"Look at your child, Algernon," she said, as soon as she could command utterance; "she looks quite well now."

"I will, I will—but at this moment I can see nothing but you."

Ellen withdrew her hand, and seated herself in an arm-chair.

"You have not spoken to my father," she added.

Algernon brushed his hand across his eyes, and turning to Captain Wareham, he pressed his in silence.

Little Agnes whispered,

"Mamma, is that the gentleman I am to call papa?"

"Yes, my love, go to him!" and the obedient child timidly advanced a few steps. Algernon caught her in his arms, and devoured her with kisses, while the tears flowed fast down his manly cheeks.

The tears of a man are always powerfully affecting. What must the tears which Algernon shed over their child have been to Ellen? She did not weep. She had worked herself up to be firm, and not to allow this interview to lead to any outpourings of the heart, to any expressions of feelings for which she might afterward reproach herself.

At length Algernon spoke.

"Our child, Ellen, is not like you," and he looked from one to the other with eyes of such melting tenderness, that it would have been difficult to say to which, at that moment, his heart went forth most.

"Oh, no!" she exclaimed, "thank Heaven, she is like you," but she presently added, in a more composed manner, "She has quite recovered her looks and her strength now."

She loved to hear Algernon say *our* child. And yet how strange to see the father of her child clasp it to his bosom,

shed tears of love over it, and to be obliged to keep up a calm, company conversation.

Captain Wareham now inquired which road Algernon had taken, whether the rain had not made it very bad travelling, and a few more such interesting questions.

"Did you come straight from Belhanger?" asked Ellen, in a low and tremulous voice.

"I left it yesterday afternoon."

"It must look very pretty, now the spring is come; and is my—is the garden very nice?" One silent tear stole down Ellen's cheek as she spoke.

"Your garden is lovely! It might be a paradise! but to me it is a place of torment."

"Oh! do not say that, Algernon. But you do not look well. You have come a great way this morning; you must be hungry; will you not have some luncheon?"

"Hungry!" he said, and gave her a half-reproachful glance; "thank you, I could not eat."

Captain Wareham now inquired what Hamilton's political friends thought of the Spanish war, and whether the Spaniards were sincerely attached to the cause of liberty.

"I do not know, my dear sir. I never communicate with my political friends. I know nothing about them."

Ellen's heart smote her, that she should be the cause of his abandoning a career for which he was so well fitted.

"This must not be," she said;—"you ought to exert yourself, Algernon. Indeed this is not right!"

"But tell me, Ellen, how do you pass your time? What occupations have you?"

"I will tell you what she does, Mr. Hamilton," interrupted Captain Wareham, "she goes about doing good, and there is not a poor distressed creature within miles that does not know her, and bless her."

Algernon at first felt vexed with Captain Wareham for taking up the answer to his question, for he longed to hear the music of Ellen's voice; but he no longer regretted it was her father who had spoken, for the report of her good deeds was equally sweet in his ear.

"God will bless you also Ellen!"

"I wish to remember all you have told me about the management of the poor, and I hope I do not encourage the idle; but I have no influence here, and I cannot give them good cottages, and gardens, as you have done, and have thus enabled them to live comfortably, without charity. Are the cottages as nice as ever?"

"I believe they are. Yes, they look very neat as I ride by."

"And how is poor old Amy Underwood?"

"Dead—poor old soul! She died last winter."

"Poor Amy! So she is at rest! Who takes care of her little granddaughter?—She made me promise I would always be a friend to her when she was gone. Algernon, you will see that the child is religiously and virtuously brought up? I cannot,—you know."

"Yes, yes! that I will! Can you think of nothing else for me to do? Tell me more protégées of yours, that I may attend to them. Express your wishes, give me your orders. You will invest anew Belhanger with interest in my eyes. You will give me something to live for."

Ellen smiled faintly and gratefully.

"Have pretty Jane Earle and her husband got a cottage yet? If they had a tidy cottage to themselves, it might confirm him in his reformation; now he has such a pretty wife too."

In this manner Ellen endeavoured to lead him to again interest himself in his peasantry, while to herself there was a certain melancholy pleasure in uttering the names and picturing the spots once so familiar to her.

Agnes meantime had nestled herself comfortably into his arms. Perhaps she had some indistinct recollection of him; perhaps it was merely the caprice which sometimes makes children immediately attach themselves to one person, while they take an antipathy to another, but from the first moment she seemed attracted by him. Ellen looked at them, and thought how happy were those who might in peace and honour gaze every day of their lives upon their child, and the father of their child.

The hour for departure approached. At four o'clock the chaise was again to be at the door. Captain Wareham's dinner-hour was five, and he had to walk back into the town.

In a clear and gentle voice Ellen addressed Algernon—

"One thing I wished to ask you, Algernon, before you went. Should you not like to have Agnes visit you at Belhanger?"

"Not for worlds, Ellen, would I rob you of her for a moment!" It was true that he would not have robbed her for a moment of that which was her only pleasure; but he also wished to put an end to such an idea, as it would deprive him of his one excuse for seeing Ellen. "And are we not to meet again for six months, Ellen?" he added, after a pause.

She exerted all her might, and answered—

“Not for six months.”

“I may write to you?”

“No; we must not correspond. If Agnes should be ill, of course I will let you know; and if you should be ill, you must write to me. For God’s sake, write if any thing should be the matter!” she repeated, with an expression of terror from the image she had herself conjured up.

The chaise had been some time announced. Captain Wareham, though from the bottom of his heart he pitied them both, thought there was no use of prolonging this distressing interview—to himself doubly so, for he felt himself a third; and yet Ellen had made him promise to give her the support of his presence. She thought, if the interview should not remain unknown (and what does remain unknown in the present civilized state of society?) her fair fame could not suffer if it was conducted under the sanction of her father.

Algernon had kissed his child; he had wrung Captain Wareham’s hand; Ellen had risen from her seat, and again held forth her hand to him.

“May Heaven bless you, my dear and valued friend!” she said.

“Ellen! my own Ellen!”

“You had better go now,” she gently replied. “My father is not so young as he was, and we must not make him too late for his dinner. This day six months we meet again!”

Algernon replied not. Slowly and reluctantly he left the room: he dared not remonstrate; he knew her firmness to do what she deemed right, and he feared by word or deed to lose the grace he had obtained: he threw himself into his carriage and drove away.

Captain Wareham walked home to dinner, and Ellen at length gave way to the tumult of feelings which she had resolutely subdued.

It would be impossible to say whether joy at having seen him, or sorrow at having parted from him, preponderated: she certainly found it more difficult to resume the occupations to which she had accustomed herself; but still she had a point to look to, a bright speck in the distant horizon, to lead her on through the cheerless desert of life.

Algernon religiously executed all Ellen’s innocent behests, and, for her sake, did resume in some measure his former habits of practical utility: he attended Parliament—he was put upon committees—his eye once more flashed with fire—his countenance recovered its animation, his manner its energy.

His reappearance in the world was hailed with joy by all who knew, and consequently loved and respected him. Though there was still a corroding care within—though there was still a cheerless void in his heart, yet when once he began again to mix with his fellow-men, and to enter into public affairs, there were so many objects to interest and occupy a man, that the next six months were not to him so interminably long as to Ellen.

At the appointed day and hour he was again at the cottage, and claimed her approving smile for his obedience to her wishes. She had carefully spelled every newspaper, waded through columns of parliamentary debates on subjects she could not comprehend, for fear of missing, or not properly appreciating, some short reply of his; but it had been with joy she had seen his name frequently among the speakers, and her approving smile was not wanting to reward him.

When his parliamentary duties were over, he found his lone and loveless home so cheerless that he again became a frequent visitor at Coverdale Park, and Ellen often heard of him when there, through Caroline. It was a consolation to him to see Ellen's sister, and to talk to her of past happiness. Lord and Lady Coverdale were friendly people, and Miss Coverdale was a gentle, pleasing girl, who loved Ellen with the enthusiastic warmth of admiration which girls often feel for a young married woman a few years older than themselves.

The consciousness that she did full justice to his beloved Ellen, that she had tact and discrimination enough to perceive her superiority to other people, formed a bond of union between them, and the Coverdales were almost the only family of his former acquaintance from whose society Algernon appeared to derive any pleasure.

From his frequent visits, and from the intimacy which subsisted between him and Miss Coverdale, reports arose which immediately came to the ears of Mrs. Warham. Some people have the faculty of always hearing news, and Caroline was one of those.

She knew how totally groundless was such an idea; but she thought if such gossip should reach * * *, it might be very unpleasant to Ellen, and that she should do well to warn her against giving any credit to it. In short, to prevent her hearing it, she immediately wrote her word of it.

She told her, "It was quite a foolish notion of some meddling neighbours; that Algernon's pleasure in the society at Coverdale was principally on account of their all knowing

Ellen so well, and because Coverdale was so near Longbury;" and she bade her "not fret herself at all, if she did hear such silly things said."

The very possibility that Algernon should think of any other wife, or that people should imagine he could think of any one else, was almost agonizing to Ellen. She instantly drove the suspicion from her mind. She felt too certain of his unceasing affection for her. Yet when she had done so, she reproached herself with selfishness, in wishing to doom him to a life of singleness—him so formed for every domestic affection. She told herself she ought rather to wish he should find happiness with another, as she was for ever precluded from contributing to it.

"But I am sure," she thought, "quite sure, there is no truth in the report. I know him too well!"

Still the rumour having ever arisen was disagreeable. Implicit as was her reliance on his devotion, it proved how completely he was looked upon in the world as a free man. How entirely null and void the world considered her marriage to him. She knew it. The fact had been too painfully proved and ascertained! but she experienced a sense of humiliation, that it was so decided by the law of opinion, as well as by the law of the land.

CHAPTER XX.

God doth not leave the unhappy soul without
An inward monitor, and till the grave
Open, the gate of mercy is not closed.

SOUTHEY'S *RODERICK*.

CRESFORD, as we have before mentioned, had given his mind to business; but his visionary schemes of aggrandizement had not proved successful. He had, on the contrary, involved the concern in considerable embarrassments, and to retrieve all, he ventured on a still bolder speculation—which failed!

In a few words, the house broke.

He had gone through much during the time that these difficulties had been thickening around him, and when at last the storm, which had been long gathering, broke upon his head, it

found him totally unequal to bearing up against it,—in impotent anger against himself, and every one else.

It was galling to his spirit to find that by his rashness and imprudence he had reduced from affluence to a state of indigence men who had been honestly labouring all their lives. For himself, if he could not make himself a name, as one of the richest merchants of the great emporium of commerce, he cared not if he were the poorest. But he felt for his children. He loved them, though it was not with a tender love. He meant his son should be as great a man as any in the kingdom; he intended that his daughter should be the most accomplished of girls; he would have spared nothing for their education.

Ellen first learned the failure of his house from the public papers, and she mourned over the altered fortunes of her children. She grieved too for the unfortunate man who seemed doomed to have his hopes blasted in this world, while his earthly sorrows had not as yet softened or prepared his heart for happiness in another.

Her brother Henry soon wrote her word of some further particulars, and informed her that the firm would be able to pay a good dividend in the pound; so that, although a bankruptcy, it would not be a disgraceful one. He had called to inquire about Cresford, and the answer was that he had been ill, but was now better, though not well enough to receive visitors. Henry could not ascertain what prospects there were for his future provision; but promised to let her know when he could learn any thing further.

Pity swallowed up all other feelings, and she anxiously awaited the result. Henry again wrote to her. He had called a second time, and was refused admittance. The servant shook his head, and said, "He feared his master was very ill. The doctors said they could do nothing for him unless his mind was kept quiet, and as for keeping his mind quiet, that was impossible. He was night and day poring over papers, and the lawyers were with him two or three times a day; if they did not come, he kept sending for them, so there was no use in telling them not to trouble him till he got a little better." The servant added, he thought "it would be a good thing if he would go to Brompton, and be with his children for a while; but it made him worse to talk of that. He said he could not bear to think of his poor ruined children, much less to see them."

Ellen's heart bled for him. She sometimes considered within herself whether duty did not call her to him in his present miser-

able state. But perhaps her presence might only irritate him; and even if he did wish for it, could she bring herself to attend his summons? She scarcely thought she could do so. She begged Henry to discover whether he ever mentioned her name. It would be a relief to know he did not think of her.

Henry, the next time he called, sounded the servant, who was an old acquaintance of his, as he had been porter at the time when Henry belonged to the house. He could not find that Cresford ever alluded to his wife. Once, when he was very ill, he had said, "If I get worse, let her be written to!" without mentioning any name.

Ellen's mind was set at ease upon this subject. She had nothing to do but patiently to wait the event.

It was some time before she heard again, and then was from Henry, to say he had seen Cresford. That, having learned he was considerably worse, he had again called, and had ventured to send up word that he was there. That Cresford had admitted him, and that he had been shocked at the havoc which a few months had made in his appearance. That he was certainly very ill, but he thought it was the mind which preyed upon the body—the sword consuming the scabbard; his face was haggard—his eye was restless—his voice feeble and hollow. There seemed to be no positive complaint, except a slight but frequent cough. He spoke much of his affairs—said he did not care for himself, but he lamented the fate of his children. That, perhaps, his schemes had been imprudent, but that his partners hampered him. They would not enter into his views, and their timid prudence prevented his projects being carried on in the only manner which could lead to a successful termination, boldly and gallantly as they had been conceived.

"God knows," he added, "what remnant of fortune may be saved from the wreck, or whether I may have any thing to allow—your sister. That thought torments me past all others. She will be supported by Hamilton, after all!"

Henry added that he had done all he could to tranquillize his mind—had told him how few her wants were; that he and Captain Wareham would do their utmost to supply them—in short, said all the soothing things he could. He had left him with the promise of calling again in a few days.

Before these few days had elapsed, Ellen received an express from Henry, imploring her to come forthwith to London—that a change for the worse had taken place, and that the physicians thought Cresford could not survive many days, perhaps not many hours. That, upon being made aware of their

opinion, he had expressed a passionate desire to see her, and that he thought she ought to lose no time in acceding to it.

In two hours from the moment she received Henry's letter Ellen was on her way to London, having left little Agnes with her father and Matilda. Captain Wareham was not well, and was quite unequal to so sudden a journey.

The journey was long. She had time to think, and to think of every thing: of every probability, of every possibility. But there was one on which she dared not allow her mind to rest.

What was to happen if Cresford died? She felt it criminal to look forward to what would then ensue. If he recovered, what then? Would her visit to his bed of sickness be a reconciliation? Could he wish to take her back, when he knew that her whole heart was another's? What would, what could happen? She strove not to look forward beyond the present moment. She had but one course to pursue. She could not refuse such an appeal from a dying man, and that man her lawful husband. The path of duty was clear; for the rest, she must trust to Providence for guidance and support.

She first drove to her brother's lodgings; she found him there. His countenance betrayed anxiety, his brow was careworn.

"He is yet alive," he said; "I sat up with him all night. In your absence he will scarcely allow me to leave him."

"Oh, Henry, this is an awful meeting! How will he receive me? Does he feel kindly towards me? Or must I endure his reproaches from his death-bed?"

"He is entirely changed; he is gentle and forgiving now; all his former love for you seems to have revived."

"That is almost worse! Poor Charles! His love has ever been a source of woe to both of us."

Henry lost no time in conveying her to Cresford's house, which was attached to the office, and, although not in the most fashionable part of London, was roomy and commodious, and was usually inhabited by the head-partner of the concern. In that house she had passed four years as his wife.

It was with painful recollections and painful anticipations that she traversed the stone-hall, and mounted the broad but dismal oak staircase, once so familiar to her.

Henry left her in the drawing-room, while he went up-stairs to prepare Cresford for her arrival. She looked round; there were the curtains which she had chosen, the carpet, the sofas of her selection—now dirty and dingy with years of London wear.

Henry returned. He said the physicians were at that moment visiting their patient, and that when they left the room he would apprise him of her arrival. She had still to wait. When once the mind is worked up to the performance or the endurance of any thing disagreeable or painful, a few additional moments of suspense are almost agonizing.

She mechanically took the hand-screen off the chimney-piece. It was one she had herself ornamented with wafer cameos, and little scraps of verses. The gold paper was all tarnished, the cameos broken, the writing half-effaced, but she could still distinguish some lines, which carried her back to the feelings of former days, and the emotions under which they had been selected, till the flood of recollections which crowded upon her almost bewildered her.

In the course of ten minutes the physicians entered. Ellen felt awkward and confused. They must think her presence so odd! She knew not what tone to take, and it was with timidity and shyness that she ventured to ask what was their opinion of Mr. Cresford.

The taller, a pale, slender man, with a sweet countenance, and soft manner, informed her, "That he could not venture to say the symptoms had improved; that the lungs and the heart both seemed to be affected, and that although he might linger some time, or indeed might ultimately recover, still a fatal termination might take place in a few hours—that it was a case in which medicine could do little or nothing!" and having delivered this most conclusive and luminous opinion, he sat himself down to a table, and there wrote prescriptions for some draughts, some pills, an aromatic mixture, a liniment, and a warm plaster for the chest, and prepared to take his leave.

The second physician, who was a short, thick man, with a bob-wig, stood quietly by, while there played around his mouth something approaching a smile at the inutility of all these measures at the present stage of the disorder.

Ellen ventured to turn to him with an inquiring countenance.

"Madam," he said, "if you wish to know my opinion, it is that he cannot recover. He is too far gone for that. But we do not justly know what his complaint is, so we may prove wrong, and while there is life there is hope. So I wish you a good morning!" and away he trudged, having made a short, abrupt bow to Ellen.

When they were gone, she sat down for a few moments, and tried to collect her thoughts for the interview which approached.

She heard Henry's step on the stairs; her heart felt sick within her—his hand was on the lock of the door.

"Now, Ellen!" he said, "Cresford is tolerably composed. But how pale you are! Shall I get you any thing?—a glass of water?"

"Nothing! thank you; I am quite well now."

She took Henry's arm, and he led her up-stairs. He gently opened the door—the apartment was darkened. As they entered, the nurse discreetly slipped past them out of the room.

Coming from the full light, Ellen could scarcely see. She approached the bed; he was propped up with pillows and cushions almost in a sitting posture. She could distinguish that he looked ghastly; she shook from head to foot, and leaned heavily on Henry's arm.

"Ellen! are you come at last? I was afraid you would not have arrived in time. I am ill—very ill—and I wished to see you once more; you will soon be free of me, and then—but I wished to see you, and to forgive you for all I have suffered on your account, and to ask your forgiveness for having made you miserable too. I ought not to have brought you to a trial; it was a bad feeling of revenge which drove me to it, and I repent it now; but I was maddened—goaded to desperation. Ellen! I have loved you fearfully! I have loved you unto death—for I am dying of a broken heart! The doctors do not know my complaint—I can tell it them!"

Ellen had sunk on her knees by the bedside. She sobbed audibly.

"Tell me you are sorry for me," he continued; "and tell me that you forgive me as truly as I forgive you."

"Oh, Charles! you know I do pity you, and I have from the beginning. I have not wilfully done any thing to increase your wretchedness. As for forgiving you, that I do, indeed, from the bottom of my heart."

"Well, I have your pity!—and your forgiveness!—your love I never had!"

There was a mixture of dejection and of hardness in the tone in which the last few words were uttered. Ellen could not reply. It would have been a glaring falsehood to say it was true love she had ever felt for him; an impious and a useless falsehood, to lie to one on the verge of eternity.

Turning to Henry, he inquired,

"Are the children come yet? I wanted to bless them, and to bless my wife too; for you are still my wife, Ellen!—as long as I am alive, you are my wife—I am your husband!"

There was a shade of his former stern and violent manner, which made Ellen shudder to her inmost soul.

"Are my children coming?" she faintly asked.

"Yes! I sent for them hours ago. Why do they not come, Henry Wareham?" he inquired, in a peremptory and authoritative voice.

"I expect them every moment," replied Henry.

"Ellen, come nearer!" She drew nearer. He extended his thin and bony hand. "Give me your hand—no! the other!" He took her left hand, and looking solemnly in her face, "Who put that ring on your finger?" he said. She could not reply. She had never had the heart to take off the ring Algernon had placed there; and in all the agitation of the last day, she had not remembered any thing concerning the rings. "Is that the ring I placed upon that finger?" and he held her hand with a firmness that appalled her: "answer me, and answer me truly!"

"No!" she faintly replied.

He dashed the hand he held away from him, with a strength of which all who had seen him for the last few days would have deemed him utterly incapable.

She tremblingly drew off the ring, and offered it to him as a token of submission, and recognition of her duty to him.

"Take it away!—destroy it!—I cannot look on it!" He turned away his head, and spoke with a vehemence which alarmed them. "Throw it into the fire—let me know it is consuming."

In humble penitence for having, by her inadvertence, so embittered the last moments of the unhappy man's life, she walked to the fire, and, as he bade, committed the treasured ring to the flames. As she was doing so, she felt her soul die away within her.

He had raised himself up with the unnatural strength of great excitement to witness the execution of his behest, and he fell back exhausted and faint. He gasped for breath. Henry and Ellen hastened to him. They thought his last moment was approaching; but he rallied. "Where is the ring I placed upon your finger?"

"It is at home: I put it carefully away when—"

"Speak on; finish your sentence."

"When—the other—was placed there."

"You have kept it, then? You did not cast it away?"

"Indeed I preserved it religiously. Are you not the father of my children?" she added, in a gentle, deprecating tone.

wi
 B
 of

"Do not thus agitate yourself! Be calm, be
 as weak, frail, erring creatures; we should
 as we hope to be forgiven. Your children
 be here, and let them not see their father thus per-
 She paused.

"Your voice does sooth my perturbed and
 speak on, Ellen,—and come here to the light.
 behind the curtains, Henry, let me look on her face while my
 "How tremble beneath his fixed and melancholy gaze.
 "Oh Ellen, how I have loved you! I am too near the grave to
 curse any one, or else I could breathe forth a malediction on that
 who, in his unmanly, deliberate, and useless vengeance,
 has blighted the prospects, ruined the characters, and blasted
 the hopes, both in this world and the next, of hundreds of
 unoffending fellow-creatures. I am not his only victim! Mine
 is not the only ruin of body and mind for which he is answerable!
 But I will forgive, as I hope to be forgiven. Ellen, repeat the
 Lord's Prayer to me; I think from your voice it will do me
 good."

Ellen and Henry knelt by the bedside, and Ellen rever-
 ently and humbly obeyed him. As she spoke, his eyes gradu-
 ally closed, and soon after he fell into a short but refreshing
 slumber.

When he awoke, the nurse stole in to inform them that the
 children were come. He bade them enter.

It was now more than a year since they had been parted
 from their mother, and when they unexpectedly saw her, they
 ran to her arms in silent joy. They made no exclamation, for
 the subdued voice of all the attendants, the darkened room,
 the vague awe of a death-bed, overpowered their young minds,
 and prevented any burst of delight. They clung round her,
 and she folded them to her bosom with mingled emotions, in
 which pleasure bore no inconsiderable part.

"Children," said Cresford, in a gentle tone.

"Your father speaks," Ellen hastily whispered; "go to
 him, my loves."

"My children," he continued, "kneel here by my bedside:
 I wish to give you my blessing, my parting blessing. Be good,
 and never let your passions get the better of you. Mind what
 your mother says, for she is an excellent and a conscientious
 woman, and she will teach you your duties. Ellen, I give you
 my blessing too; may you be happy!"

Ellen was on her knees. She seized his pale hand as it lay

feebly on the bed, and covered it with tears and kisses. He smiled faintly and gratefully upon her, and pressed her hand. He soon again dropped off to sleep.

The children were removed, but Ellen remained. She had an earnest wish to do her duty by him to the last.

In the evening, when the physicians came, they found him considerably better; the sleep he had enjoyed had refreshed him. His pulse was steadier, he was able to take some nourishment, and they appeared almost to imagine permanent improvement might take place.

These words fell strangely on Ellen's ear. She could not but rejoice in his amendment. Dreadful as was the prospect for herself, it was not in the nature of any thing so gentle, so feminine, so forgiving as Ellen, to watch the painful breathing, the feeble smile, the hectic cough, and not wish the breathing less painful, the cough less frequent.

The comparative tranquillity of his mind had a wonderful effect upon his frame, and for two whole days it almost seemed as if the natural vigour of his constitution would conquer. On the third, however, a violent fit of coughing caused the rupture of a blood-vessel, and there was no doubt but that a few hours must close his sad existence.

The effusion of blood could not be stopped. He gradually became weaker and weaker. As his strength declined, his tenderness towards Ellen increased, and all angry feelings vanished. From her hand alone would he receive either food or medicine. She watched over him with unwearied attention, and when at last his spirit quietly departed, so calmly, so gently, that the bystanders could scarcely ascertain the moment when he drew his last breath, it was her hand that closed his eyes, and she imprinted on his cold forehead, clammy with the dew of death, one pious kiss of duty and affection.

CONCLUSION.

Methinks if ye would know

How visitations of calamity
Affect the pious soul, 'tis shown ye there !
Look yonder at that cloud, which through the sky,
Sailing alone, doth cross in her career
The rolling moon ! I watch'd it as it came,
And dream'd the deep opaque would blot her beams ;
But, melting as a wreath of snow, it hangs
In folds of wavy silver round, and clothes
The orb with richer beauties than her own
Then passing, leaves her in her light serene.

SOUTHEY'S RODERICK.

ELLEN remained in the house till the last duties had been performed. The funeral of poor Cresford was conducted without pomp or show, and she then returned, with her restored George and Caroline, to her own cottage.

She put his children in the deepest mourning. For herself, she also wore deep mourning ; but she did not dress herself in weeds : she felt, under all the circumstances, that it would be a mockery.

She had not written to Algernon to inform him of Cresford's death. She had felt a superstitious horror when his wedding-ring was committed to the flames ; and the last parting scenes with Cresford had to her feelings sanctioned and confirmed anew her first union, so that at the moment when she was free to give herself for ever to Algernon, she felt herself more severed from him than she had ever yet done.

She knew not where he was ; she had not allowed him to correspond with her ; and though she felt it was scarcely kind not to be the first to inform him of the event, she had not courage to write to tell him she was free. She had never believed the rumours which had arisen from his frequent visits to Coverdale Park : she had been so sure of his devotion, that she would have felt guilty of ingratitude towards him if she had allowed them to give her any uneasiness : yet now, for the first time, the recollection of the report would recur to her mind. It was possible, just possible, there might have been some foundation for it. She had heard, she had read a thousand times, that while there was hope, man might remain faithful ; but that it

was woman, and woman only, who could live a life of hopeless devotion. She could have no right to complain if he had at length looked elsewhere for domestic bliss. He would still have been true and kind to her, beyond what she had any right to expect.

As she did not write at first, from a feeling of delicacy towards the memory of Cresford, she now felt unwilling to do so from the shrinking sensitiveness which had always formed a leading feature in her character.

She was not long, however, kept in suspense. Algernon had been in Scotland at the time, and more than a week elapsed before he learned the event. He instantly returned to London. He there found that Ellen was at her cottage, and he followed as fast as four horses could carry him.

She was startled from a revery of much hope, mixed with a little fear and wonder, by the clatter of a carriage at her door. Her heart leaped within her; she doubted not who it was, and in two seconds she found herself pressed to Algernon's bosom.

She did not, this time, insist upon two years of widowhood; but consented, at the end of one month, to be privately re-married.

They agreed to renew those vows to which their hearts had so strictly adhered, at Longbury church, and to Mr. Allenham's they speedily removed: Captain Wareham and Matilda followed, and Henry arrived from London.

It was late in the month of October. The party had gathered round a cheerful, blazing fire, on the evening preceding the ceremony. It was long since they had met together with feelings of peace and happiness, such as they now experienced, although in some of the party it was happiness chastened, and subdued by all they had previously endured.

Algernon's eyes were fixed on Ellen with an expression of holy love, which bordered on veneration. Matilda remarked upon his steady gaze, and told him he would put Ellen quite out of countenance.

"I was thinking," he replied, "that if she had not been as virtuous as she is beautiful, as pure as she is kind, as firm as she is affectionate, if she had listened to me when I wished to fly to America, we should never have known this hour of unalloyed happiness."

"Well," answered the lively Matilda, "those thoughts were very respectful and respectable thoughts. I cannot find any fault with them!"

Ellen smiled through the tears of virtuous gratification which Algernon's words had called forth.

"It is quite a comfort to see you smile, Ellen," said Caroline; "I thought I should never have seen those white teeth again! And when do you mean to curl your hair? I long to see your glossy black ringlets! Do not you, Mr. Hamilton? Do not you miss the ringlets very much?"

"I miss nothing!" replied Algernon; "Ellen is once more my Ellen. I have scarcely looked to see how she dressed herself."

"Now that is what I call true love," exclaimed Matilda; "Algernon does not look at Ellen's beauty. Ellen is Ellen, and that is enough for him. You all call me proud, and difficult, but when any man like Algernon loves me as Algernon loves Ellen, then I will love him as Ellen loves Algernon."

"Do you give this as a proof you are not difficult, Matilda?" replied Ellen, smiling almost gayly: "there are not Algernons to be met with every day."

"Then I will stay and take care of you, papa. You know you would not manage at all well without me! you would have nobody to scold! and what is more, there would be nobody to scold you," she added, playfully tapping her father on the cheek.

"I will tell you what, Matilda," replied Captain Wareham, who was too happy to be angry, "you must keep down this same spirit of yours, or nobody will put you to the trial."

Matilda looked archly at Caroline, as if Caroline and she knew something that disproved Captain Wareham's prognostics.

The marriage was to take place early in the morning, as they meant to reach Belhanger the same day. The children had been already sent there, that they might be ready to greet them on their arrival.

Before eight o'clock, the whole party walked quietly up the hill to the church.

There Mr. Allenham again pronounced over them the nuptial benediction. They both repeated after him, clearly, distinctly, and fervently, each word of their vow, and with a delightful but sober certainty of waking bliss, of assured happiness, the small party wound their way down again to the parsonage.

It was a fine October morning, and the sun was quickly dispersing the vapours which still hung in the low grounds.

The valley had, half an hour before, appeared almost like a lake, as they looked down on the mist below. The trees, the spires, the knolls of higher ground were gradually emerging,

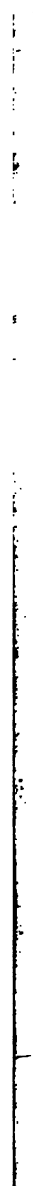
and in a few minutes all was clear and joyous, dancing in the morning sunshine. The robin redbreast sung cheerily from the dewy hedges, which were still bright in their rich autumn livery.

"All nature smiles upon us, Ellen," whispered Algernon. "So the clouds of our early life are dispersed! All before us is bright and serene."



THE SINGLE WOMAN
OF
A CERTAIN AGE.

VOL. I.—N



THE SINGLE WOMAN

OF

A CERTAIN AGE.

CHAPTER I.

Duke. And what's her history ?

Viola. A blank, my lord.

WHY is it that the bustling matron, who (having, without preference or selection, married the first man who proposed to her) has spent her days in the unsentimental details of a household, a nursery, and a school-room, merely considering her partner as the medium through which these several departments are provided for?—why is it that the languid beauty, who has sold herself to age or folly for an opera-box, an equipage, a title?—why is it that the scold, who has jangled through a wedded life of broils and disputes—and the buxom widow, whose gay and blooming face gives the lie to her mourning garments?—why is it that they all cast a pitying glance of contempt on the “single woman of a certain age” who ventures an opinion on the subject of love? Why do they all look as if it were impossible she could ever have felt its influence?

On the contrary, the very fact of singleness affords in itself presumptive evidence of the power of some strong and unfortunate predilection. Few women pass through life without having had some opportunities of what is commonly called “settling;” therefore the chances are, that betrayed affections, an unrequited attachment, or an early prepossession, has called forth the sentiment of which they are supposed incapable—and called it forth, too, in a mind of too much delicacy to admit the idea of marriage from any other motive than that of love.

The following story, which is ushered into the world by so unattractive a title, might afford an example, that a life which appears "a blank" in the history of events may be far from "a blank" in the history of feelings.

By the death of her father, Lord T——, Isabella St. Clair found herself, at the age of nineteen, an orphan, possessed of a considerable fortune, of great personal attractions, and of all the accomplishments which, in these days of education and refinement, are expected to grace young ladies of fashion. Her brother, the young Lord T——, was not of an age to serve as her protector, and accordingly she removed to the house of her uncle and guardian, Sir Edward Elmsley.

Sir Edward and Lady Elmsley were of that respectable class of English gentry who, by not attempting to move in a more elevated circle than that in which they are naturally placed, command the esteem and respect of those above, as well as of those below them. Their daughter Fanny, although of the same age as her cousin Isabella, had not yet been initiated into the pleasures and the pains of a London campaign.

Isabella, who had been accustomed to a life of excitement, was not sorry, at the expiration of her mourning for her father, to join in whatever gayety was going forward, and to exercise once more the power of that beauty which, even in London, had attracted its full share of admiration.

In the country, where beauty, rank, fashion, fortune, and accomplishments are not so common, of course the brilliant Miss St. Clair was the star of every ball; and all the young men of any pretensions in the county vied with each other in obtaining a word, a smile, a look from the lovely Isabella.

Nor did the charms with which she was really endowed lose any thing from want of skill in the possessor. She had the art of keeping an indefinite number of persons occupied with her alone; she had left her shawl in the next room, and, with a thousand graceful apologies, she asked one person to fetch it for her, at the same time holding her cup in a helpless manner, and casting a beseeching glance around her, which brought a hundred eager hands to set it down. Then she looked timidly confused at having given so much trouble. Presently she had a message to send to her cousin Fanny, with which she despatched one admirer, while she hinted in a low voice to another, who was pressing her to stand up in the next quadrille, that she did not like to do so while Fanny was sitting still. The devoted youth flew to dance with Fanny, claiming as his reward the hand of Isabella for the ensuing waltz. She knew how to

pique and to excite the vanity of each : to one she implied she had heard something of him which certainly had very much surprised her ; to another that she understood he had been abusing her horridly ; she playfully scolded a third for not admiring Fanny half as much as he ought, and wondered how he could be so blind. She assured a fourth that he and all the world had quite mistaken her disposition, indeed, that scarcely any one did understand her ; implying there was a depth of character and feeling beyond the reach of the multitude, and thereby piquing and interesting the sentimental youth to discover these hidden treasures.

Fanny, meanwhile, placid and contented, enjoyed what she met with that was agreeable, without its ever crossing her imagination to feel envy or jealousy of her cousin. She was not mortified, for she saw her so beautiful, so brilliant, that all rivalry seemed out of the question. They were happy and affectionate with each other. Isabella, constitutionally gay, good humoured, and joyous, was never crossed or thwarted by Fanny, and, although an acute observer might discover in her fondness for her cousin, a tone of superiority, a protecting kindness, Fanny so completely acquiesced in that superiority that it never for a moment wounded her self-love.

About a year after Isabella's arrival at Elmsley Priory, the society of that neighbourhood received a very animating addition in the young Lord Delaford, who, soon after his return from his travels, established himself at his beautiful castle of Fordborough. He joined to the most prepossessing appearance and manners an excellent character, considerable talents, and extensive possessions. He paid a visit to Sir Edward Elmsley, and of course Isabella counted upon him as her devoted slave, and thought such a conquest was not to be neglected.

She was rather surprised that he handed the quiet Fanny to dinner, but she satisfactorily accounted for this circumstance by supposing he considered it a courtesy to which the young lady of the house was entitled. But when, in the course of the evening, he voluntarily seated himself by Fanny, and appeared interested by her conversation, she certainly was very much astonished, and not much pleased.

To Lord Delaford, who had lately come into the country, wearied and disgusted with the dissipation of Paris, and the turmoil of London, the style, the vivacity, and even the beauty of Isabella were too much what he had been in the habit of seeing every day to possess any peculiar attractions for him ;

while the calm brow, the placid air, the perfect innocence and unconsciousness of Fanny's manner appeared to him as soothing and refreshing as the green trees and verdant meadows after the glare and confusion of the streets. In conversation he found her modest and well-informed, and he sought her society the next day and the next. By degrees his manner assumed a tone of admiration which, to a person accustomed as she was to be placed in the shade, had more than the usual effect attributed to admiration, that of enhancing the charms by which it was first excited.

Those who imagine they do not please often neglect the means by which they might do so; whereas, if they once become aware that all they say and do finds favour in the sight of others, they are no longer ashamed of being charming, or afraid to be agreeable.

People in general were astonished at the wonderful improvement in Fanny, but her mother remarked that, when Lord Delaford entered the room, her soft brown eyes shone with a lustrous consciousness, that if he addressed her, the colour mounted in her pale and delicate complexion, and she understood full well the cause of this improvement.

If Lord Delaford had been originally attracted by the unruffled placidity of her expression, he was infinitely more so by finding that his presence had the power of disturbing that placidity. Though he could not doubt that he possessed many qualities which might make him an object of preference to young ladies, and every adventitious qualification to make him approved of by the old; though he must have known he had been sighed for by daughters, and sought by mammas; still he was not one of those men who are piqued by coldness, and inflamed by the difficulty of winning the object. On the contrary, there was a natural diffidence about him which made him vulnerable to the attentions of women, and easily daunted by any appearance of disinclination.

Fanny was too amiable and too humble ever to have felt jealous of her cousin, but she was not insensible to the pleasure of finding herself suddenly preferred by the one person whose favour all were desirous to gain. Every thing seemed to prosper to the utmost of hers or her parent's wishes. Lord Delaford became every day more serious in his attentions, and there appeared to be no reason why Fanny should not yield to the engrossing fascinations of a passion which, if felt for the first time at the age of twenty, combines with the freshness of a first love the depth and strength of which the more formed character is susceptible.

In the mean time Isabella no longer found the same gratification in the insipid crowd of commonplace admirers, whose suffrages had before elated her. She felt, truly enough, of how much more value were the sincere esteem and affection of one true heart, than all the frivolous admiration of people she did not care for; all her former conquests lost their value in her eyes; she, for the first time, felt herself the forgotten and neglected one. Vanity, like ambition, only becomes the more insatiable by being fed, and, as the single Mordecai, who refused to bow before the pomp of Haman, imbittered all the glories of his triumph, so the one person who was proof against her charms outweighed in her estimation the herd who acknowledged their power.

She had too much tact, too much knowledge of the world, too much spirit, to allow these feelings to be visible to the eyes of common observers. Lord Delaford and Fanny were so completely occupied with each other that they could not remark any thing about Isabella; but Lady Elmsley, with maternal quicksightedness, perceived her mortification, and with pride, which may perhaps be pardoned in a mother, could not help being pleased, that at length her daughter's merits should be valued, as they deserved, above those of Isabella.

Occasionally Isabella caught a glance of triumph which escaped from the eyes of Lady Elmsley, and she resolved to let slip no opportunity of gaining the attention of Lord Delaford.

Mortification is but half-felt while it is only felt in secret. It is not till we perceive it has been remarked by others, that it becomes one of the most painful sensations to which the weak, the vain, and the worldly are liable, and one from which the most humble and pure-minded can scarcely boast of being entirely free.

CHAPTER II.

Gerarda.—Que todo se aprende hija y no hai cosa mas facil que enganar a los hombres de que ellos tienen la culpa ; porque como nos han privado el estudio de los ciencias en que pudieramos divertir nuestros ingenios sutiles, solo estudiamos una, que es la de enganarlos, y como no hay mas de un libro, todas lo sabemos de memoria.

Dorotea.—Nunca yo le he visto.

Gerarda.—Pres es excelente letura, y de famosos capitulos.

Dorotea.—Dime los titulos siguiera.

Gerarda.—De fingir amor al rico y no disgustar el pobre.

De desmayarse a su tiempo, y llorar sin causa.

De dar zelos al libre y al colerico satisfacciones.

De mirar dormido ; y reir con donayre.

De estudiar vocablos y aprender bailes.

* * * * *

Y de no enamorarse por ningun acontecimiento, porque todo se va perdido, sin otros muchos capitulos de mayor importancia.

LOPE DE VEGA.

ISABELLA had attentively studied the character of Lord Delaford, and she felt sure that if she could once get him within her toils, she should be able to keep him there. She had discovered, that although too refined not to be disgusted by any open attempt to attract him, there was a considerable mixture of vanity and of humility in his composition : and she flattered herself she could work upon both these feelings.

She one day happened to sit next him at dinner, and contrived, with a tact for which she was peculiar, to turn the conversation upon himself. She said she never knew any one of whom she was so much afraid : to which he replied,

“That is very odd ! I have always been reckoned a good-natured sort of fellow.”

“Oh, yes !” she answered ; “I am sure you are good-natured ; but your very good-nature helps to frighten me. You are so unlike other people ; and I feel so awed when you are present.”

“Well, that is strange ! I don’t think I ever awed anybody before. Do I look so cross ?”

“Oh ! it is not that ; but you are so good ; and you always say just what you should say, and no more. I should be afraid to utter, or to do any thing foolish before you.”

"Well, I should be as useful to you as Prince Cheri's ring in the fairy tale. It is a pity I am not always by your side!"

"Oh! but then I should always be in a fright;—not that I mean it is a disagreeable sort of fright." And she turned the conversation, fearful of showing any design of attracting him.

In the evening, he, as usual, turned over the leaves of Fanny's music-book while she was singing, or forgot to turn them over, while gazing with delight upon those melting, yet innocent eyes, which met his so kindly and so trustingly—eyes that looked as if there lurked in the heart beneath depths of unawakened and unexplored feelings, which only waited to be excited.

But when he was alone, the remarks of Isabella recurred to his recollection, and he wondered what in him could have struck her as being so singular and so reserved. The next day, when they were riding, he found himself near her, and reverted to the conversation of the preceding day.

"I have been quite uneasy, Miss St. Clair, at finding I am so disagreeable as I must be, if I am the precise, formal, measured person you describe me to be."

A certain step is gained when, instead of starting a new and indifferent subject, the topic of the preceding conversation is resumed. Most coquettes know, by intuition, that the best mode of accomplishing this is to talk to persons of themselves. Isabella's heart beat quicker at finding how well she had succeeded in awakening his curiosity; but assuming a nonchalant manner, she answered,

"Disagreeable! Surely I never could have said any thing half so uncivil?"

"Oh, certainly you did not tell me in so many words that I was disagreeable; but you implied it."

"No, no! Indeed I think I said every thing most flattering—that you were so very good."

"Well, I suppose if I am so very good, I must not consider being good, and being disagreeable, as synonymous terms? and yet you made it appear yesterday as if they were."

"Oh, Lord Delaford! how can you accuse me of saying any thing so shocking? I only declared you were so good, so superior, I was afraid of you."

"But a person who makes you fear him must be disagreeable to you."

"No, indeed:—I like to be awed. I am fond of an organ in a cathedral; and I admire lofty mountains, and beautiful stormy skies, and every thing that is grand and sublime in art

and in nature ! Could one bear to hear one's own feeble voice mingle itself with the pealing reverberations of the organ in the glorious pile of St. Peter's ? And does one not feel one's own nothingness when among the mountains, the torrents, the precipices, the peaks, the glaciers of the stupendous Alps ? Yet surely these are pleasurable emotions ! With me, at least, awe and pleasure are very compatible sensations."

As she spoke, her large and brilliant eye glanced upwards for a moment with an expression of lofty enthusiasm.

Lord Delaford gazed upon her, and mentally exclaimed, "That girl has a soul !" Presently relaxing into a smile, as if ashamed of her own eagerness, she added, "I believe Doctor Spurzheim would discover in me the bump of veneration ;" and putting her horse into a canter, the whole party became mixed together, and she addressed herself to some one else. Lord Delaford mechanically found himself by the side of Fanny ; but it was some time before they became engaged in any thing that deserved the name of conversation.

By degrees, however, the unobtrusive gentleness of Fanny had its usual effect upon him ; and they discoursed calmly and agreeably upon subjects of literature, or the immediate events of the neighbourhood ; but that day there were none of those flattering turns of phrase, that deferential manner of listening which, not appearing in the commonplace form of compliment, have the effect of flattery, without putting one on one's guard against it.

Fanny returned from her ride less exhilarated than usual. She thought the wind was rather cold, and her beautiful, thorough-bred horse not quite agreeable.

At dinner Lord Delaford sat between Isabella and herself, and his attention was, to say the least, divided between the cousins. Isabella was in high spirits. She was animated by the desire and the hope of pleasing. She caught an uneasy look from Lady Elmsley, and she could not suppress an emotion of gratified pique. She had too much the tone of good society ever to run the risk of being noisy ; her flow of spirits only showed itself by being exceedingly droll and lively ; and though perhaps she amused in some degree at the expense of the absent, her dancing dark eyes glanced with such brilliancy, such merriment, such a look of gay archness, that no one could suspect her of harbouring a feeling of ill-nature towards any one. Nor in truth did she harbour any such feeling. She only wished to amuse ; and there are few people who have not occasionally been led, by the intoxicating pleasure of causing a

laugh, into ridiculing persons towards whom they felt no ill-will. Lord Delaford was entertained, and laughed incessantly at her quaint ideas. He wondered why Fanny did not seem more to enjoy sallies which appeared to him so full of talent and of wit. He thought it argued a want of imagination, which disappointed him. Fanny meanwhile was depressed, she knew not why; but when she retired to rest, in the stillness of her chamber, she made a discovery as painful as it was humiliating.

Surprised to find herself so very serious when others were so much amused, in doubt and trembling she looked into her own heart; and she found it to be nearly engrossed by one overwhelming passion. She had always intended to keep herself "fancy free" till she could devote her whole soul, her pure unhackneyed affections, to one only object for ever. From the easy footing of society in a country-house, her intercourse with Lord Delaford had been free and unconstrained; his attentions, although constant, were not marked, and nothing had occurred to call her mind to the effect they were gradually, but surely, producing. It was not till the fear came over her that he did not care for her, that she discovered she had ever believed in his preference; it was not till she felt how inexpressibly painful was that fear that she discovered her affections were fixed on one only object for ever.

She was suddenly aroused from her fancied security, and found within the heart which she had imagined fresh and uncontaminated, love,—unrequited love, and jealousy,—jealousy of her dearest friend. She thought herself degraded. She was miserable. But she did not allow her mortification to swallow up all other feelings. Maidenly pride remained, and she determined he should never perceive the power she had allowed him to acquire over her.

Lord Delaford, on his part, reflected upon the increased attractions of Isabella, and upon the want of vivacity of Fanny. Though no coxcomb, he thought it possible Fanny might entertain for him feelings which, his conscience told him, would have been wounded by the unusual degree in which he had been occupied with Isabella. His good-natured heart smote him at the idea of giving pain to so gentle and lovely a being, and he joined the breakfast-party the next morning full of kindness and interest for Fanny, flattered by the interpretation he had himself given to her coldness, and well prepared to return any indications of preference which he might perceive in her manner towards him.

Fanny had schooled her heart, and the more she was really

agitated, the more was she resolved to wear a calm exterior; the more she knew there was a sentiment within her bosom which could not be confessed, the more was she resolved no human eye should discover it. She was aware that sudden coolness might be construed into pique, and she determined to be merely careless and indifferent. She did not remember that she might, by this means, lose what most she wished to gain. She did not calculate. The abstract idea that any woman should love any man better than he loved her—that any woman should be won unwooed, roused her pride for the sex in general; and that she herself should be one of these poor, weak, infatuated creatures, gave her a sense of humiliation against which her very soul rebelled.

Lord Delaford watched for some indications of the sentiments he had in his own mind attributed to her; but he found her as she intended to appear,—gay, careless, cold. He did not perceive any affectation in her gayety, or any thing studied in her carelessness.

Lady Elmsley precisely read the state of her heart, and put the right construction upon the trifles which constitute encouragement or repulse, and which denote preference or indifference; but Lord Delaford was quite puzzled, and somewhat mortified.

It is said there is an instinct which teaches every one to read their fellow-creatures where love is concerned. This is true of all indifferent spectators who can decipher emotions often not acknowledged by the individuals to themselves. Not so the persons most interested. Sometimes they twist appearances to suit their hopes or fears. Sometimes, being aware that their judgment is likely to be prejudiced, they dare not trust to their natural impressions. Lord Delaford watched the countenance, the eyes, the expression, the words of Fanny for a day or two, and he became each day more convinced his own self-conceit must have misled him. He had studiously avoided such attentions as might commit him, and he now took care to divide them equally between the two cousins. To Fanny, who had been accustomed to his exclusive devotion, this was a virtual withdrawal of them; and she set a more strict watch than ever over all her words and looks. Isabella, who was exhilarated at receiving half, when she had been accustomed to none, was *pétillante de graces*. The more Fanny was aware of Isabella's attractions, and the more she perceived that Lord Delaford became aware of them, so much the more she wrapped herself up in impenetrable, but good-humoured reserve. Her manner lost that confiding, innocent gayety which a short time

before had been one of her greatest charms, without regaining the bashful ingenuousness which had at first attracted him from its novelty. She laboured hard to appear calm, and unfortunately succeeded but too well in her endeavours. Lord Delaford was half-provoked with himself, for having been so ready to fancy he was irresistible; and half-provoked with Fanny, for having given rise to his dissatisfaction with himself.

He was in this frame of mind when an accident occurred which confirmed him in his opinion of her coldness. He was riding a restive horse, which he alone had succeeded in subduing, and which he thought was so completely tamed that he might venture to ride it with the ladies. Isabella admired a flower in the hedge, and he turned his horse round to gather it for her. The animal, who had proceeded quietly by the side of the others, did not like being separated from its companions; and rearing suddenly, fell backwards with its rider.

Isabella was close to him at the moment of the accident, and was naturally dreadfully frightened. He had contrived to slip off on one side, and was not hurt; but there was a moment when horse and rider appeared as if they would be crushed together.

Fanny was some yards in advance, and only turned round in time to see him as he was getting up from the ground, and was therefore spared the first alarm. She was not a nervous, hysterical person; and although she turned pale, and trembled, she did not fall from her horse, or do any thing that attracted attention to herself. Isabella, really agitated, and really nervous (as indulged and flattered people are very apt to be), shrieked aloud, and burst into tears—real tears—for she affected nothing; she only gave way to what she felt, from the consciousness that she was charming, and that her emotions would not appear disagreeable and uninteresting.

She was lifted off her horse in a fainting state. Lord Delaford was supporting her. Every one was busy about her. In the confusion her hat fell off, and all her ringlets were floating on the wind: her eyes were half-closed; and the long lashes looked beautifully dark on her cheek, which was really pale. Fanny thought she never saw any one look so lovely! Lord Delaford watched her revival with an expression of intense interest; and Fanny sat still on her horse, unnoticed and unregarded, with feelings of hardness and bitterness which never before had been the inmates of her gentle bosom. This protracted exhibition of sensibility appeared to her perfectly unnecessary; and she could not help thinking that Isabella

might have recovered much sooner ; that she might have twisted up her own hair, and tucked it under her hat, without any assistance from Lord Delaford ; and that there was no occasion for several ringlets to be allowed to escape, and to stray over her face and shoulders.

Such were her thoughts when the party remounted, and proceeded homewards ; and she "hoped Lord Delaford was not the least hurt," in a guarded, constrained, and scarcely soft voice, which grated on his ear, after the languid accents of the fainting Isabella. He turned away from Fanny, and devoted himself entirely to her cousin, whose interest in his safety gave her a sort of right to his care and solicitude.

As soon as they reached home, Fanny rushed to her room, and there paced the apartment in an agony of mind which frightened herself. She envied Isabella the interest she had excited, while she felt she would rather have died than have betrayed such emotion : yet she was angry with herself for having appeared cold and unfeeling. Presently she heard footsteps approaching her door ; and hastily composing her looks, she seized a book, and appeared buried in its contents. It was Lady Elmsley, who came to tell her there was some company expected to dinner. She longed to open her heart to her mother, who, she was sure, by the increased tenderness of her manner, had read the state of her feelings : but Lady Elmsley never sought or encouraged confidence upon the subject. She saw that Isabella had superseded her Fanny in Lord Delaford's heart, and that her child's hopes were blighted—she knew that an acknowledged preference was far more difficult to eradicate than one which had never been confessed—that pride, and constancy, and consistency had induced many a girl to persevere in a devotion which, if it had never been avowed, would have died away ; and she judged of Fanny by the rest of the world.

The end of this day passed off as many succeeding ones did—in sad and bitter calmness on the part of Fanny—in flattered vanity and growing love on the part of Isabella—in gratitude, admiration, amusement, and pique, which were fast ripening into love, on the part of Lord Delaford.

CHAPTER III.

Though Marian's frolic mirth so gay
 The sultry hay-field cheer,
 Say, when the short, cold, sunless day,
 Shall close the parting year,

Will her gay smile then beam as bright,
 And beam for only thee?
 Will winter's toils to her seem light
 As they had seemed to me?

Say, will she trim thy evening hearth?
 Duteous, thy meal prepare?
 Nor know, nor dream, a bliss on earth,
 Save but to see thee there?

Unpublished Poems.

AT length the decisive moment came. Lord Delaford made his proposals to Isabella, and was accepted. Isabella herself, in all the flush and agitation of the event which decided her fate for life, came to Fanny's room, and told her what had happened,—not to triumph over her. No: she had of late been so completely occupied by her own feelings, that she had almost forgotten those she had suspected in Fanny, and she came simply in the fulness of her heart, to give vent to all the mingled emotions which every woman must experience on such an occasion. Fanny had for some time prepared herself for this termination to all her hopes and fears. Yet when the fact was certain, when she heard it with her own ears, it came upon her like a thunderbolt. She turned deadly pale; she thought that she was going to faint; but the recollection that she should be committed, not only to her successful rival, but through her to Lord Delaford himself, again restored her self-possession, and after a momentary struggle, which, thanks to the dim light of the embers over which they were sitting, and to the engrossing nature of Isabella's own thoughts, escaped observation, she was able to say, "God grant you may both be as happy as from the bottom of my heart I wish you both to be!"

She spoke with earnestness and solemnity; and Isabella gazed on her for a moment with surprise. The tone was not exactly that in which young ladies usually converse upon such

subjects, and Isabella's former suspicions flashed across her mind. But she looked at Fanny's tearless eyes, and satisfied herself that it was "only Fanny's way. Her cousin always had a more serious turn of mind than most girls."

Perhaps she was as willing not to see as Fanny was anxious to conceal the true state of the case; for though her thirst for admiration might lead her to do that which was most painful to another, she was not more unfeeling than a coquette must necessarily be. Moreover, prosperous love opens and softens the heart, and for the time at least produces an amiable disposition of mind. Though consideration for Fanny could not have prevented her attempting to gain Lord Delaford, yet now that she had succeeded in her object, it would have been exceedingly distressing to her to know the pangs under which her gentle cousin was at this moment writhing.

The half-hour bell rang. Isabella hurried away, and Fanny was left alone with her dreary, desolate, mortified, crushed, hopeless heart.

At dinner the engaged couple did not sit next each other. As there were strangers among the company, Lord Delaford thought it more delicate towards Isabella not to bring observation upon her. As a safe person he offered his arm to Fanny, and consequently sat next to her. Totally unsuspecting of her preference, and feeling on the contrary that her coldness had nipped in the bud the affection he had at first been inclined to entertain for her, he spoke to her of his happiness with the frankness of a friend. He expatiated on the perfections of Isabella, on the beautiful union of liveliness and of gayety with that depth of feeling which, though people in general might not suspect it, formed the true basis of her character.

Lovers always invest the object of their love with such merits as they have settled in their own minds to be indispensable qualifications.

There is also something particularly fascinating in the idea that one has discovered hidden treasures of mind that have escaped the observation of the common herd.

Every word that Lord Delaford uttered was a severe infliction on Fanny. All he said of Isabella's liveliness and gayety she felt was an unflattering contrast to what her manner, of late at least, had been. All he said of Isabella's sensibility she knew to be far from true; and she who was wrestling with a thousand conflicting feelings was treated by implication as a calm, cold, philosophical automaton, by the very person who was torturing them almost past endurance. Every word

that he spoke of hope and happiness was answered by an internal groan of hopelessness and misery.

But her countenance was unchanged; and her eyes, which were habitually downcast, only remained the more firmly riveted to the table-cloth, for fear they should allow any of the emotions that were working within to shine through them.

When the ladies retired, the mammas congratulated Lady Elmsley in audible whispers upon the brilliant prospects which they perceived were opening before her daughter, and the daughters looked arch when they asked Fanny what sort of a person their new neighbour Lord Delaford was.

The fire and earnestness of his manner at dinner, and the downcast reserve of Fanny's, coupled with the reports which had previously been abroad in consequence of Lord Delaford's frequent and protracted visits to Elmsley Priory, had been misconstructed by them all, and they fancied the case so clear, that it was fair to congratulate, and to quiz.

In vain Fanny repelled all their insinuations with something approaching annoyance and peevishness. Isabella cast a meaning glance of amazement, and of mutual understanding, which only confirmed the young ladies in their preconceived notion; and when the gentlemen came into the room, they contrived to leave a place vacant by Fanny, while they crowded round Isabella at the pianoforte, to look at a new song, and be rapturous over a new *galop*. Lord Delaford, who thought he had done his duty in avoiding Isabella at dinner, was only intent upon gaining a place next her, and did not even perceive Fanny, who had been detained from joining the young set, by an old lady who was very particular in ascertaining the stitch of Fanny's work. By the time Fanny had completely explained the mysteries of the stitch, Lord Delaford was among the youthful party, and she then felt it utterly impossible to get up, and to walk across the room to that side of it where he was.

She saw Lord Delaford's devoted manner to Isabella; she felt herself deserted; she knew by intuition, that all the people who had just been complimenting, congratulating, and quizzing, were in the act of becoming aware that she was not the object of his attention—that she was not the attraction to Elmsley Priory.

Such trifles as these, when the blighted prospects of a life are in question, seem to an observer, and to the person concerned, when once they are past, as not deserving of a thought, yet, at the moment, they add not a little to the bitter feelings of an already crushed spirit. Singing became the order of the evening, and Fanny was of course called upon. She had had

time to reflect upon her present position, and also to resolve it should ever remain unknown to others; she roused all her energies, and the unusual excitement brought colour and animation into her eyes. There were other gentlemen in the room, and they were enthusiastic in their admiration of the power, sweetness, pathos of Miss Elmsley's voice. But what were these praises to her? They fell cold and sickening on her heart; Lord Delaford had been in low and earnest conversation with Isabella in the embrasure of the window, and scarcely knew that she had been singing. When the music was over, however, they left their retirement, and both were struck with the fire, the gleam of worked-up resolution in Fanny's eyes, and Lord Delaford whispered to Isabella, "How brilliant your cousin looks to-night!" These few words made her heart beat with a joy at which she was herself shocked, and when she retired for the night, she looked courageously into her own feelings, and severely reproved herself for having felt pleasure in exciting a look of admiration in the betrothed of her cousin. She determined no longer to give way to sad retrospection—to dwell no more on blighted hopes, but to further, as far as in her lay, their future prospects of happiness. She knew Isabella's character thoroughly, and could not but be aware that there were many points in it which were not calculated to make a happy *ménage*. Love of admiration, a consciousness of power, and a delight in exercising that power, were among the most conspicuous. She also thought Lord Delaford was a man likely to be much influenced by those he loved, and lived with—and she resolved, if possible, to lead Isabella's mind towards using her influence over him for none but good purposes.

She came down to breakfast the next morning placid, and even cheerful. Isabella, whose mind had been quite relieved from the lurking apprehension of having cut out her gentle and unpresuming cousin, by the brilliancy and animation of Fanny the preceding evening, and had settled that she could not care about Lord Delaford, as she was so evidently elated by the admiration of the other gentlemen, was completely confirmed in this notion by her cheerfulness at breakfast, and by the manner in which she opened the conversation upon Isabella's marriage when they were alone.

In vain did Fanny try to inspire her with the same notions of devotion and self-sacrifice which she herself entertained. Isabella was in love with Lord Delaford—that is to say, she preferred him to all others, and exceedingly liked his love of

her, but as for considering his happiness, his pleasure, his advantage, his interests, before her own, the idea seemed to her an idle romantic dream.

Weeks elapsed, and the settlements were arranged; the wedding-clothes prepared.

Lord Delaford had returned, after a fortnight's absence, for the few days preceding the marriage, which was to take place in the village church of Elmsley Priory. Fanny was glad that the ceremony was to be performed in the church, for she thought that the solemnity of the scene, and the holiness of the place, would more completely eradicate from her bosom the feelings which she feared were rather smothered than destroyed.

It was, indeed a day of trial, almost beyond the strength of even her chastened spirit to endure, without betraying the struggle. She was bridesmaid, and she had to stand unmoved during the whole of a ceremony which, to the least interested, is touching and affecting. She heard him utter the solemn vow which separated him for ever from her—she saw their plighted hands—she heard the priest's benediction on the youthful couple as they knelt before him. She did not shed a tear, she scarcely trembled, when Isabella, half-fainting, leaned on her for support. She sustained her graceful bending form, she whispered her words of encouragement, till at the close, the bridegroom proudly led his wedded wife from the altar.

They returned to Elmsley Priory that the bride might change her dress; Fanny of course assisted her friend to take off the wedding garments, the Brussels lace veil, the orange-flowers, &c., which were to be replaced by a more quiet travelling costume, and accompanied her to the room in which breakfast was prepared, and the intimate friends and relations, who had been collected for the occasion, were assembled.

Isabella, flushed, agitated, happy, blushing, looked all one could wish a lovely bride to look. Fanny was calm—deadly calm.

At length the travelling carriage came to the door, the packages were all arranged, the servants were on the box, and Lord and Lady Delaford took leave of the family party. The parting kiss went round—Lord Delaford, as one of the family, dutifully embraced his new uncle, his new aunt, his new relations. Fanny saw her turn would come, and she thought she could bear any coldness rather than this kindness; she felt her heart beat as he drew near the side of the room where she stood, she was almost inclined to slip away; but pride got the better; she resolved to do nothing that could look like emotion, or might

possibly attract attention, and she stood her ground. When he took her hand and approached his lips to her cheek, she felt a cold shudder run through her, and she became, if possible, paler than before. He scarcely touched her cheek; she looked so coldly, purely immovable that he instinctively durst not give to her the kindly kiss which, in the joy and warmth of his heart, he gave to the elder branches of his new family.

They hurried through the hall, and in a moment the sound of their carriage-wheels was heard rolling by the windows.

All rushed to take a last look at them, and Fanny remained, as it were, petrified, fixed on the spot where she had parted from him.

All the visions of her days of hope crowded upon her memory; every sign of affection, every flattering attention he had ever shown her, appeared at one and the same moment present to her mind—all that had subsequently passed seemed like a dream; she felt for an instant as if she had been robbed of her betrothed; she had to rouse herself and to look round at the signs of the wedding-feast, the cake, the ices, the fruits, and to assure herself of the sad reality. Fortunately, before the attention of the guests was withdrawn from the window, she had recovered her self-possession, had sent back all the feelings which she now considered as positively criminal back to the depths of her heart, till she had leisure to drag them forth once more to the light, to examine into them and to expel them resolutely from their fastnesses.

Her head bewildered with all the thoughts she would not think, and all the feelings she would not feel, she mixed among the guests, and was again the kind, the gentle, the well-bred Fanny, attentive to the wants and wishes of every one; and although she did once help a good old aunt to jelly when she asked for chicken, and gave ice to a cousin who wanted champaign—though she did put a black satin cloak on the shoulders of a worthy old clergyman who was taking his leave, still, in the confusion, these inadvertencies escaped all remark, and the only observation made was, that Fanny was a sweet amiable creature, but she had not much feeling—they never saw a girl so unmoved during the ceremony which generally made people cry, and she did not show any sorrow at parting from her charming friend and cousin, who must be such a loss to her.

"Well," added a maiden friend, "there's no use in such a deal of sensibility. Fanny has just enough—enough to make her amiable and kind, and not enough to make her unhappy."

There was one heart which had read poor Fanny's—~~one~~

person who had watched her during the few moments when she had stood transfixed—who had remarked the trifling mistakes she had made in her civilities; and a keen observer might have read Fanny's secret by the devoted attention which her mother showed her; if he had not already discovered it by the coldness with which Lady Elmsley returned the affectionate embrace of the bride and bridegroom. Time does not stand still, though it sometimes moves but slowly, and at length the company dispersed.

The pieces of bride-cake were all directed by Fanny, till her hand was weary of writing, "With Lord and Lady Delaford's compliments," or "love," or "kind regards," according as the degree of intimacy might require.

The dinner succeeded—a large family dinner, very formal, consisting of the Dowager Lady Delaford, an old admiral, uncle to Lord Delaford,—his wife, and a very missish daughter, who thought it odd her cousin should have overlooked her charms when he was thinking of a wife;—Lord T——, the bride's brother, a youth at college, two schoolboys, Fanny's brothers,—the clergyman who performed the ceremony, who had been Lord Delaford's tutor, and was a total stranger to the inhabitants of Elmsley Priory,—and the lawyer, an old friend of the family, whose eternal flow of prosy anecdotes concerning people whom no one knew by name, proved, for the first time, invaluable—they prevented the clatter of knives and forks, and the creaking of footmen's shoes, from falling so sharp on the ear as they would have done, if they had no accompaniment but the low, gentle voice of Fanny, who was imparting to the worthy clergyman all the details he wished to know concerning the charity-school in the village. When the cloth was removed, the health of the bride and bridegroom was drunk, and the garrulous old lawyer, who had not forgotten in his quirks and quibbles his original taste for beauty, expatiated till the tears stood in his pale glassy eyes upon the virtues, the discretion, the gentleness of the bride, all which hidden qualities had been made manifest to him by the rosy lips, the blooming cheeks, the dark eyebrows, the white forehead, the glossy ringlets which had dazzled his eyes the preceding evening when she had signed the settlements. Inspired by the subject, warmed by the generous wine, the happy lawyer, directing his eyes across the table to Fanny, begged leave to propose another toast—that before six months were over, he might again find himself at Sir Edward's hospitable board on as pleasing an errand; and he hoped the bridegroom might be just like Lord

Delaford—he could not wish his young hostess a more charming husband! All eyes turned to Fanny—her brothers with a loud “Ha! ha! Fanny!—catch your fish, Fanny!”—Miss Melfort, the admiral’s daughter, with a suppressed giggle; and Lady Elmsley with a face full of anxiety and fear lest her child might betray herself. Fanny, who had never deviated from the calm and collected manner she had resolved to maintain throughout the whole of this trying day, upon finding herself suddenly the object of remark, felt the colour rush over her forehead, her neck, her arms; she scarcely knew what they were wishing her; she thought he was wishing her married to Lord Delaford. Every thing became confused—her eyes grew dim; when Lady Elmsley, pretending that she was overcome by the heat, made the signal for departure, and the ladies left the dining-room. Fanny’s trials were not yet over: Miss Melfort, naturally curious upon such subjects, wished to hear all about the whole affair—how it began—how long they had suspected it—whether he fell in love at first sight—whether he or she was most in love—whether he proposed for her to Sir Edward, or whether he spoke first to Isabella herself; and then, as she was dying that Fanny should wonder how he could have been insensible to her attractions, she began to wonder how it was that he should have preferred Miss St. Clair to Fanny; that for her part she did not admire such tall people, nor did she admire such very long ringlets. She was little herself, and her hair was exceedingly *crêpé*.

There is an end to all things: at length the wine and water came, and every one retired to rest, and Fanny found herself alone in her own room, and she sat down to indulge in all the luxury of grief. Yes, there is “a joy in grief:”—she revelled in letting her tears flow, and her sobs succeeded one another without interruption, till, exhausted and spent with weeping, she fell asleep the moment she laid her head on the pillow, and never woke till morning.

She was not a person whose eyes betrayed that she had been weeping; and she went down to breakfast with no outward traces of all that she had suffered, but inwardly feeling guilty in having allowed herself to shed such bitter tears for the husband of another.

They were, however, to be the last. She saw that her mother read her heart, and was grieved, and she would not throw a gloom over the declining years of the parent she adored, and whose health, always delicate, had of late become more so. She stifled all vain repinings; she was cheerful

and full of occupation. Her hand did shake when she opened her first letter from Lady Delaford, and her heart sickened when she saw her signature for the first time; and it took a long time to write her first answer, and perhaps when finished it was somewhat measured and cold; but all such letters are more or less constrained, and Fanny was not *demonstrative*, and it all passed off very well.

Lord and Lady Delaford went abroad soon after their marriage, and she was not put to the trial of a meeting.

CHAPTER IV.

Surtout les femmes nourries dans la mollesse l'abondance et l'oisiveté, sont indolentes et dédaigneuses pour tout ce détail. Elles ne font pas grande différence entre la vie champêtre et celle des sauvages de Canada : si vous leur parlez de bled, de cultures de terres, de différentes natures de revenus, de la levée de rentes, et des autres droits seigneuriaux, de la meilleure manière de faire des fermes ou d'établir des receveurs, elles croient que vous voulez les réduire à des occupations indignes d'elles. Ce n'est pourtant que par ignorance qu'on méprise cette science de l'économie.

FENELON.

Poor Fanny's thoughts were soon called off to real and actual sorrow, in which all other griefs were absorbed; and she almost wondered how she ever could have felt so much about any thing that did not concern her mother. Lady Elmsley's health declined rapidly; and the whole family repaired to Clifton, in hopes that she might derive benefit from the springs. In vain! Fanny was doomed to endure that sorrow to which, as being in the due course of nature, some say the mind reconciles itself with more calmness than to many others. But notwithstanding all the arguments of cool philosophy, the loss of a parent is one of the most acute and lasting griefs to which human nature is liable. It often befalls the young and the prosperous, and coming upon them in the midst of health, strength, and happiness, finds their minds unprepared and unchastened by any previous suffering. Moreover, it is a loss absolutely irremediable, which, though time may soften, can in no length of time, ever, ever be replaced.

During the whole of her mother's illness, Fanny was so occupied in her anxious attendance upon her, that every other

thought was banished from her mind. When Lady Elmsley once, and once only, alluded to the state of Fanny's affections, and spoke favourably of an amiable young man, of excellent connexions, and fair prospects, whose attentions had been unequivocal, she was able to assure her mother, with truth, "That although Mr. Lisford had not succeeded in making himself agreeable to her, all prepossession for another was quite over."

It is vain to dwell on the melancholy details of gradual decay. Suffice it to say, that Fanny watched, with agonized feelings, the last moments of a beloved parent; and only conquered her own emotions to alleviate those of her father.

After the funeral, they returned to their desolate home. Their hearts sank within them as they drove along the well-known avenue, which led straight to the front of the house on which the hatchment met their eyes, for the last half-mile of their approach.

Fanny supported her father into the drawing-room, where every object which met their eyes was but a renewal of grief. The easy-chair, with cushions of every shape, to procure ease to a frame wearied and worn out—the invalid sofa-table, the footstool just where Lady Elmsley had last used it—the portable book-case, containing her favourite authors, stood on the table as usual—the large basket of carpet-work, which was deemed too cumbrous to be taken to Clifton—the glass vase, which Fanny always kept replenished with the choicest flowers, and which the gardener had now filled with care, that the room might look cheerful, and which the housemaid had placed on the accustomed spot, all combined to make their return more painful, if possible, than they had anticipated.

The next morning, when, before her father left his room, Fanny altered the disposition of the furniture, and removed the things which so forcibly reminded them of her for whom they mourned, she felt it almost a sacrilegious act to touch them.

Time, however, rolled on, and Sir Edward became calm and resigned; but Fanny's spirits did not rally. She had fervently loved her mother; she missed her in every occupation, in every duty, in every amusement. Strange to say, her thoughts, which during her mother's illness had been so completely weaned from the subject of her own disappointment, in her present quiet and solitude would revert to former scenes.

She did not recur to the happy days of delusion, when she believed herself the object of Lord Delaford's preference; she felt that would have been a sin; but she fancied that by dwell-

ing only on recollections, in which the images of Lord Delaford and of Isabella were blended together, she was accustoming herself to the idea of their union, and preparing her mind for seeing them, as man and wife, when, on their return from the continent, they were to pay their promised visit to the priory. She forgot that,

“En songeant qu'il faut l'oublier,
Elle s'en souvient.”

As she wandered about her lonely flower-garden, she at one time remembered how Lord Delaford had gathered some of the beautiful double dahlias, and had called Isabella's attention to the rich blending of their various hues, how Isabella had laughingly twisted them into her hair : and how surpassingly beautiful she had looked when bending over the marble basin (she had used it, as nymphs of old, for her looking-glass), while the evening sun just tipped her dark brown curls with a golden hue, and tinged her downy mantling cheek with a more mellow bloom. Fanny could almost fancy she again saw the eyes of rapturous admiration with which he watched her graceful action.

At another time, if she were training the straggling honeysuckles over the treillage, she recollected how her hopes had received their death-blow, when, on entering the drawing-room before dinner, she found Lord Delaford and Isabella in their morning dress, still occupied in reducing the unruly tendrils to obedience; and how Isabella blushed to find it so late, and Lord Delaford insisted it must be Fanny who had mistaken the hour. In recollecting these circumstances, she again experienced the same painful feelings of mortification and despondency; she did not thus acquire forgetfulness or indifference.

After an absence of about a year, Lord and Lady Delaford announced their return to England, and their intention of finding themselves very shortly at the priory. Fanny believed herself rejoiced at the intelligence, and began setting every thing in order for their arrival.

She was agitated when they actually came, but at that moment the recollection of her mother, and of the sad change that had taken place in her home, was uppermost in her mind, and almost all the tears she shed were from a pure and holy source.

Isabella was truly sorry for the loss of her aunt: Lord Delaford was all kindness, although the sort of *gêne* which

exists between the dearest and most intimate friends when they meet after any severe misfortune, prevented their at first deriving much pleasure from each other's society. The persons least interested do not feel sure how far they may venture to allude to the sad event, how far they may venture to be cheerful, and their fear of not exactly falling in with the tone of feeling of the mourners, impart to their manner a want of ease which is infectious, and prevents a free and unconstrained flow of confidence.

This, however, did not last long. Fanny soon poured forth into Isabella's ear every melancholy detail of the last moments of her beloved parent, and found her heart warm towards the person to whom she could dwell upon the subject.

When nothing occurred to call forth her love of admiration, her love of power, or her love of the world, her naturally good heart, and her constitutional good temper, rendered Isabella as loveable as she was lovely. Her faults had been fostered by her early education, while her good qualities had not been cultivated.

Since her marriage, the devotion of her husband had rendered her fully aware of her unbounded influence over him; while, at the same time, the society with which she had mixed on the continent, and the unsettled life of travellers, had been peculiarly unfavourable to the acquirement of domestic habits.

When Fanny, in return, inquired into the manner which Isabella had passed her time abroad, preparing her mind for a picture of conjugal bliss, and resolving to rejoice in the happiness of two people for whom she felt so sincere a friendship, her feelings were put to a very different trial from that which she anticipated. All Isabella's descriptions were of the gay parties at Florence; the delightful riding-parties from Rome; the agreeable dukes, and princes, and cardinals, and monsignores they had met with: the brilliant fancy-balls, the entertaining masquerades, the gorgeous fêtes, the select soirées, the exclusive *petits soupers*, and Fanny wondered that Lord Delaford should be grown so fond of dissipation. Yet she remarked that when he spoke of foreign scenes, he seldom dwelt on those which alone had formed the subject of Isabella's descriptions. He frequently spoke of home and of rural occupations as delightful, and conversed with Sir Edward on the state of the agricultural interest, and that of the poor. On such occasions Isabella would laughingly interrupt him, and beg the gentlemen to be more gallant, and not to discuss subjects which could be of no possible interest to them. Fanny,

who had been accustomed to consider attention to the humbler classes as one of the duties of the rich, could not help one day saying to her, when the gentlemen left the room,—

"But don't you think, Isabella, it is rather interesting to us who live in the country, to learn how one may do good, and not run the risk of doing mischief, when one wishes to be useful to one's fellow-creatures?"

"But, my dear, you don't imagine I am going to be buried in the country all my life, enacting the part of a Lady Bountiful at Fordborough Castle. I have no objection to supplying the money, but as to staying to distribute it, I leave that to the clergyman's wife, whose business it is to attend to that kind of thing."

"But Lord Delaford is so fond of the country, and he always talks of what he means to do at his own place. Depend upon it, he means to live in the country a great part of the year; I have heard him say he thought it right."

"Oh yes! You know it is never worth while to argue a point—I hold it out of the question for a man and wife to dispute; but I have not the least idea of letting him put these golden-age romantic notions in practice. Not that I have the least objection to the country at Christmas, or at Easter, or occasionally in the autumn, in a reasonable way; but, as for taking up my abode at Fordborough Castle, I shall not do it."

"But every thing is prepared for you now. He has had the drawing-room and saloon new-furnished, and your own boudoir is made lovely!"

"Oh, you know it could not be left as it was in my good mother-in-law's time, with straight-backed chairs, and pembroke-tables; but I sha'n't live there, you will see if I do."

"But, Isabella, I am convinced Lord Delaford wishes it."

"Oh! he fancies it would be vastly agreeable; but in fact, he would be moped to death there, and so should I."

"Well, I don't understand being moped to death with a husband one loves," and she felt a slight blush arise to her cheek, which she attributed to the little rebuke implied in her answer; and she added, half-smiling, "You know you do like him very much, Isabella!"

"Like him! to be sure I do. He is the best creature in the world, and after all, nobody looks so like a gentleman. He was generally the best-looking man in the room except Count Pfaffenhoffen, and he was so foolish that one was ashamed to be seen talking to him, though one endured his conversation for the sake of his waltzing. He is the most be-

coming waltzer! He is just the right height, and he does not bend too forward, nor too far back, and he holds his arm just right. What a pity it is he should be so silly!"

Soon after this conversation Lord and Lady Delaford went to their own place, where they established themselves very comfortably. Fanny spent a day with them. She began to flatter herself that Isabella's worldly notions were only to be found in her conversation, and not in her actions. She left her very busy, and apparently happy, in making discoveries of curious old China, and arranging it in the drawing-room. While these and similar occupations lasted, she was amused and contented, and her husband was delighted to see her, as he thought, acquiring a taste for the country.

One short week afterward, Fanny received a note from her, written as she was setting off for London, to meet her dear friend Lady B——, who was only in town for a few days, in her way from Paris to Ireland.

She soon again heard from her, that she was very unwell, and that Doctor S—— had ordered her warm sea-baths, and that she was therefore obliged to go to Brighton.

There they remained till Christmas, when they returned to Fordborough Castle, and brought with them a large party of friends. Fanny was to join them at the particular wish of Sir Edward, who lamented that she did not regain her natural spirits.

She found Lord Delaford looking harassed and oppressed. His company was not of his own choosing, and wearied him. Of his wife he saw but little, and he had no time for his own occupations.

One day he had to do the honours of the place to a party of particular friends for whom he did not care a straw; another to provide shooting for a set of young men, who thought it a very bad day's sport if the birds did not get up as fast as two *gardes de chasse* could load their guns.

There is nothing more agreeable than the exercise of hospitality towards those whom you like, and who like you in return; but when every point in which the accommodation and luxuries of your house fall short of those at such a hall, or such a castle, where every amusement you may be able to provide, merely provokes a comparison between the sport Lord so and so, and the Duke of so and so, gives his friends; the delightful and poetical rites of hospitality become a tiresome tax upon the time and patience of the luckless possessor of an ancient mansion and an extensive domain.

This fashionable but most unsatisfactory party dispersed, and Lord and Lady Delaford were on the point of going to town for the meeting of Parliament, when they obtained a promise from Sir Edward that Fanny should pay them a visit in London after Easter. To do Isabella justice, she felt real affection for Fanny, and sincerely regretted seeing her so joyless, and conscientiously believed that the pleasures of London would prove a balm for every sorrow.

Fanny was unwilling to leave her father, and had a vague dread of being so entirely domesticated under Lord Delaford's roof. Had her mother been still living, she would have interfered to prevent her child's feelings and principles being put to so unusual and so needless a trial; she would have taken care that the peace of mind she had striven so hard to regain, should run no risk of being disturbed; but Sir Edward would not hear of her dutiful regrets at leaving him; and if she harboured any other thought in her mind, it was one which could not be hinted at,—one she scarcely dared own to her secret soul, without implying a mistrust of herself.

To London, therefore, she went. She found Lady Delaford in the full vortex of dissipation. She possessed beauty, rank, talents, and riches. Many women who might boast of these advantages are not the fashion. But Lady Delaford added to them all the wish and the determination to be a leading person in society. What wonder then if she instantly accomplished her object, when, without any of the qualifications before enumerated, it is often attained by simple, strong volition?

CHAPTER V.

Nae mair of that, dear Jenny : to be free,
 There's some men constanter in love than we.
 They'll reason caumly, and with kindness smile,
 When our short passions wad our peace beguile :
 Sae, whensoe'er they slight their maiks at hame,
 'Tis ten to ane their wives are maist to blame.

GENTLE SHEPHERD.

LORD DELAFORD, though considerably occupied with politics, was not entirely engrossed by them, and he wished extremely for the quiet enjoyment of domestic life. When he returned

from the House, he would fain have been greeted by his wife, or at least he would have been glad to know where he might join her; but among the many engagements for each night he did not know where to find her: and, after having once or twice followed her through the whole list of parties, he gave up the point, and went to bed, jaded and out of spirits.

She seldom came down-stairs till so late, that he had long breakfasted, and was on the point of going out to some committee. Sometimes, being free from business, he determined to remain at home, and to devote the morning to the society of his young and lovely wife. On these occasions he usually found her so beset till two o'clock by her maid, by milliners, by tradesmen, by innumerable notes to answer, and arrangements to make, that she could only answer him with an absent air, her thoughts evidently intent on the organizing of some plan of amusement for that or the ensuing day. After two o'clock, her drawing-room was of course crowded with dandies whipping their boots—with sage politicians, a race who peculiarly enjoy the *délassement* of a pretty woman's society,—and with literati, a tribe who are very apt to find peculiar gratification from the favourable suffrage of the lovely and titled, though upon the most dry and abstruse work, into which the fair critic had never looked, and which, if she had looked into it, she could not possibly have understood. This select crowd (for none but the most distinguished of each genus was admitted) did not disperse till the carriage had been long announced, and the hour of some appointment was long past; when, hurrying away from the admiring throng, she drove from her own door without having given a moment of her attention to her husband.

Lord Delaford's anticipated morning of conjugal felicity generally ended in his seizing his hat and stick, and marching forth at a quick pace, and in no very enviable frame of mind.

Fanny was at first bewildered by this mode of life, but she accompanied her friend through the whole routine, till she found that neither her spirits nor her health could stand such constant wear and tear: she was obliged occasionally to remain at home, while Isabella continued her giddy round of pleasures; and she could not avoid perceiving that Lord Delaford was a man formed for all the charities of life—and that Isabella was throwing away happiness such as seldom falls to the lot of woman.

The gradual decline of wedded happiness is a melancholy subject of contemplation to the most indifferent by-stander; how much more so to one deeply interested in the welfare of

both parties ! She felt justified in her dejection. Perhaps, if she had witnessed the unrestrained flow of confidence, the fullness of mutual devotion, she might not have found the sight so exhilarating as she sincerely believed it would have been. However that might be, reassured by her sorrow at not seeing her wishes for their happiness fulfilled—that her joy, if they were fulfilled, would be as great, she reposed in fancied security that the interest she took in his welfare was that of simple friendship, and she did not think it necessary to avoid him if he found her alone in the drawing-room, where he in vain sought the wife of whom he was still deeply enamoured.

He would sometimes sigh to find her still absent, and would occasionally express his desire of a more domestic life ; he even confessed feelings of discontent and dissatisfaction—he wished his wife would give him more of her society—he wished her disposition was more like Fanny's.

These words fell on her ear with a sensation she scarcely knew how to define. Was it pleasure ?—was it pain ?

It is a dangerous situation for any young woman to be the confidante of any young man's sorrows, especially if they proceed from blighted affections and deceived hopes ; but to Fanny how tenfold dangerous !

The world is scarcely sufficiently indulgent to those who are deprived of the tender vigilance of a mother ; nor are the young who enjoy such a blessing sufficiently thankful for possessing it. Had Lady Elmsley lived, Fanny would never have been placed in the position of confidante to the domestic sorrows of the man who had won her young affections, as the lover approved of and courted by her parents. Was it in nature that she should not think, "If I had been his choice, the happiness of which he so feelingly deplores the loss, might then

'Have blest his home, and crown'd our wedded loves.' "

Another circumstance occurred, which roused her from the security into which she had lulled herself.

Among the multitudes of young men who frequented Lady Delaford's house, some were sensible to the unassuming charms of Fanny, and especially Lord John Ashville became seriously attached to her. There was no objection to him, and Isabella flattered herself she would have the pleasure of announcing to Sir Edward that, under her auspices, Fanny had made a brilliant match. Both she and Lord Delaford were astonished when he was rejected, and Fanny herself was

grieved to find she could not love him as she thought it her bounden duty to love the person to whom she should swear eternal constancy. She would have been glad to prove to herself that former impressions were completely obliterated, but she could not succeed in persuading herself that she preferred him to all others.

Nothing is more common than that a person under the influence of mortification and disappointment should rush headlong into a fresh engagement; but this most frequently occurs when the mortification is one of which others are aware, and such a measure, it is hoped, will be a virtual disproof of the fact. Though a dangerous experiment, it is one which succeeds oftener than might be expected from so desperate a remedy. Fanny's sense of right and wrong, however, could not reconcile itself to the plain fact of solemnly avowing an untruth, and she already found the duty of watching over her secret affections sufficiently difficult not to venture to impose upon herself the additional one of loving where she was not inclined to do so.

Perhaps time and perseverance might have conquered her objections, but a proposal once made and once rejected, an opportunity is seldom afforded for further acquaintance.

This event had an unfavourable effect upon her mind. It proved to her that her heart was not free, that she had combated in vain.

She was one day looking back upon her wayward fate, and reproaching herself for her weakness, when Lord Delaford entered the room and inquired for Isabella.

Fanny told him, "She was walking in Kensington Gardens with the Misses Merfield."

"And when do you expect her home?"

"Lady B—— takes her from Kensington Gardens to Grosvenor Place, where they dine together; and she accompanies her to the French play in her morning dress, so I am afraid she will not be at home till she returns to prepare for the balls."

"Balls! why how many is she going to to-night?"

"Oh, there are five on the list, but she is only going to two."

"And what becomes of you?"

"I dine with my father's old friend Mrs. Burley, and then I shall go quietly to bed, for I was at the duchess's ball last night, you know."

"So, I suppose, I must dine at my club, for I hate a solitary dinner in my own house. If I cannot have the comforts of home, I will play at the independence of a bachelor. Well,

when I married, this was not the life to which I looked forward. But how comes it you are so quiet? Why do you not run the same course? Why are you not all in the ring? You can endure the sight of your own fireside. You can find time for conversation and reading. Your mind is not in a perpetual whirl."

"Oh, but you know I am not very strong; I could not do so much."

"But have you, then, the inclination?"

"Why, not quite; I like it very much in its way; nobody can enjoy society more, I am sure, only—"

"Only you have room in your heart for other things; you are not wholly engrossed by that all-devouring passion for the world. Ah, Fanny, if you had been able to like me when first we were acquainted, I should have been a happier man."

"Lord Delaford!" exclaimed Fanny in a voice of doubt and fear.

"Why, you know, when first I went to Elmsley Priory, you were the person I should naturally have liked, only you did not care for me, and Isabella did. Kind and affectionate as you are in other respects, you seem to have no room in your heart for love, as poor Lord John has experienced also. But Isabella! she then seemed made up of feeling!"

Fanny dared not speak, breathe, move, for fear of betraying her agitation. Did she hear from his own lips that he had loved her? Did she hear him accuse her of coldness, while her brain was dizzy, and her heart throbbing with feelings which, for two long years, she had attempted (she now felt how vainly attempted) to quell? And must she sit still and allow him to think her insensible and heartless? Yes! religion, principle, and duty, forbade her betraying, by word or look, emotions which might have invested her in his eyes with the only charm in which he fancied her deficient. Impossible to let him ever guess she could harbour an unlawful preference for the husband of another, that other her kind and unsuspecting cousin. The very idea made her recoil with horror from herself. A pause ensued. She longed to break it—could she trust her voice to speak? What would Lord Delaford think of her silence? But, if he should perceive that her voice trembled! She was relieved from her difficulty by his exclaiming,

"No! it could not have been my own infatuation! Isabella was then all I believed her to be!"

Fanny perceived he was not thinking of her, and she had time to compose herself. The love to which he had so calmly

alluded had left not a trace behind, unless the confidence he felt in her now might owe its origin to the esteem he had then imbibed for her character.

Following the course of his own thoughts, he continued to compare what Isabella once was to what she was now become, he regretted their tour on the continent, and attributed her present dissipation to the habits acquired in Italy and at Paris.

Fanny was able to utter commonplace hopes that her cousin would soon be weary of this useless life, and assurances that her heart was still true and warm.

When she was alone Fanny found herself fearfully happy. A load seemed taken off her mind. Painful as it might be to know that by her own pride (false pride, perhaps) she had lost the happiness of her life; the joy of finding that she had not let herself be won unsought; that she had not wasted the whole affections of her young pure heart upon a person to whom they had always been a matter of perfect indifference; that her love had not been wholly unrequited, relieved her from that humiliation which had constantly sunk her to the earth.

She was however convinced that a longer residence under Lord Delaford's roof would not be conducive either to the peace or the purity of her mind. She had been considering what excuse she could make for wishing to return to Elmsley Priory, when, in the course of conversation, Lord Delaford one day spoke of her presence, her example, her advice, as the pillar on which he rested his hope of reclaiming Isabella to the quiet duties of a wife, and he entreated her to use all her influence over her cousin towards the accomplishment of this object.

This request gave a new current to her thoughts. If it was true that she had influence over Isabella, that she might reclaim her from the worldly course she seemed likely to run, would she be justified in leaving her friend at this moment? if she could be the means of causing his happiness though through another, would she refuse to attempt it?

People often argue themselves into believing it their duty to do what their inclination prompts. In this case, however, Fanny really wished to find herself once more under her father's roof. She trembled at the undertaking before her—she felt a salutary fear and doubt of her own heart, which she had found so weak, and she humbly strengthened herself for the task imposed upon her. She looked with satisfaction to the prospect of being really useful to others, and she thought that, next to being the object of his love, the most enviable situation was to be the object of his gratitude.

Modest and unassuming, she had never ventured to remonstrate seriously with Isabella about her mode of life; indeed, she had always experienced a degree of shyness in alluding to Lord Delaford, and to the feelings of a wife, which had prevented her saying what she might naturally have done. She had also an instinctive horror of interfering between man and wife—on most occasions a praiseworthy fear; but which in complying with Lord Delaford's wishes, she thought it right to overcome.

But how to introduce the subject?

Common and trite observations upon the duties of matrimony she knew would only excite Isabella's raillery upon her antiquated notions; but perhaps by alarming her fears she might have some chance of arresting her attention.

Fanny was so little accustomed to having any plan, any ulterior object, in her communications with her fellow-creatures, that her heart beat, and she felt almost guilty, as she seized the first opportunity when they were alone, to say,

"I wonder, Isabella, you are not afraid of quite losing Lord Delaford's affections."

"Quite lose his affections, Fanny! What can you mean? I certainly do not anticipate any such misfortune," she answered, smiling; and her eye glanced complacently over the mirror, at which she was trying on the hat which she was to wear that evening at a *bal costume*.

"Why, my dear Isabella, you must be aware he is not what he was—that your indifference is beginning to have a corresponding effect upon him."

"Nonsense, Fanny, you are joking!" But she took off the hat, and sat arranging and rearranging the feathers, though in a manner which would have been far from satisfactory to the artiste, who had hit off that particular disposition of feathers in a fortunate moment of inspiration.

Instinct had served Fanny on this occasion as well as deeper knowledge of the world; for vanity and affection can both take alarm at the idea of losing the devotion they have been accustomed to. She now remained silent, simply because she did not know what she had best say; but her silence had the effect of piquing Lady Delaford. After a pause of several minutes, Isabella added,—

"Lady B—— and Mrs. Clairville tell me they never saw a husband so devoted as mine; they wish I would impart my secret that they might profit by it."

"They mean he is kind, and lets you have your own way; that he is the least selfish of human beings; but you must

know and feel that he is not the contented cheerful being he once was ; that his countenance does not brighten when he sees you, as it once did ; that he is silent, abstracted. You cannot be happy, Isabella, and see your husband—and such a husband !—gradually weaning himself from your society, his confidence lessening, his affections cooling ! Did I say he was indifferent ? No not indifferent, but hurt—wounded ! he is shutting up his heart from you ! Oh, Isabella ! and can you let such a heart close itself from you ? you who might have all the treasures of that noble mind, that manly understanding, that warm generous soul, poured out at your feet—can you throw away such happiness ? you who might be the happiest woman in the whole world !”

Her voice faltered—a tear trembled in her eye—she dared not trust herself to speak another word. Isabella was struck with Fanny’s manner, though she jestingly replied,

“One would think I was the worst wife in the world ! Now, I could name you a dozen much worse among our most intimate acquaintances.”

“But, Isabella, are you satisfied with not being a bad wife ? Don’t you wish to be a good one ?”

“Well, I do not see what harm I do. I am never cross ; I never worry him ; I do not run in debt ; and I am very civil to all his friends, whenever he asks them to dinner, however great bores they may be : and it is not every wife who can say as much for herself !”

“But, Isabella, of what comfort are you to him ? If he has any annoyance, does he find you ready to sympathize with him ? If he has any joy, are you there to share it with him ? When do you communicate your thoughts, opinions, pleasures, pains, to each other ? You do order dinner for him ; but really I cannot see what other advantage he derives from having a house, a home, a wife, *une maison montée*.”

“Well, I see what you are driving at all this time ; I will make breakfast for him to-morrow morning—that will be quite right and wife-like.”

At this moment, the servant entered to say that the box at the French play which her ladyship had wished to have had been given up, and that it was at her service for that evening.

“Oh, Fanny, that is charming ! We can go there for the two first pieces, and come home to dress.”

“But Lord Delaford was to dine at home, and he will dine alone if we go.”

“Oh ! he does not mind that.”

“Doesn’t he ?” said Fanny, in a low, marked tone.

Lady Delaford desired the servant to let the man wait ; and Fanny felt she had gained something.

"Now, I don't think he will care a pin whether we are at home or not ; and he goes back to the House afterward."

"Not till ten o'clock, he said."

"Married people should not see too much of each other. *Toujours perdrix* is insipid !"

"How much have you seen of him to-day ?"

"Why, let me see ! he looked in, did he not, just as we had done breakfast, about one ?"

"Yes, and your Italian improvisatore came two minutes afterward, whose energetic rhapsodies of gratitude for your patronage, and admiration of your talents, were delivered in so stentorian a voice, that he took his departure, to prevent the drums of his ears from being broken. And yesterday—what did we see of him yesterday ?"

"Why, he dined out, you know, at a political man-dinner—that was not my fault—and in the morning we were at Lady F.'s breakfast."

"And the day before ?"

"Oh ! that was the day of our water-party to Greenwich ; and that occupied the whole day. Well, I see how it is—but you will make me spoil him ; and then, when he is quite unmanageable and untractable, I shall reproach you !"

"Well, dearest Isabella, I give you full leave to do so—then !"

Lady Delaford rang the bell and sent back the tickets.

"Now how bored we shall all three of us be to-day at dinner. I shall be thinking all the time of that dear little *Mademoiselle Hyacinthe*."

"No ! no ! you won't, dear Isabella. You will be your own gay, agreeable self."

Lord Delaford came home to dinner, and seemed pleased to find so small a party. Isabella told him, with an arch glance at Fanny, that he was very near finding a still smaller one : that the tickets for the best box at the French play had been sent to them after all."

"And why did you not go ?" asked Lord Delaford.

Isabella did not like to take all the credit, when she felt she deserved but little, and she answered, "Why, I believe Fanny suspects you of having a bad conscience ; at least she thought you would not like to be alone."

Lord Delaford cast a glance of gratitude towards Fanny, which made her heart beat with a joy for which she had no

occasion to reproach herself. He thanked them both for their attention to him, and was more gay and communicative than he had been for some time. The dinner was agreeable. Isabella was pleased to feel she was doing right, although she did not know that was the reason she was in spirits. Lord Delaford was gratified, and full of hope that more domestic days were about to dawn upon him. Fanny was animated, but there was a flutter in her animation, she scarcely knew wherefore.

CHAPTER VI.

Trepideva pur anche per quel pudore che non nasce dalla triste scienza del male per quel pudore che ignora se stesso somigliante alla paura del fanciullo che trema nelle tenebre senza saper di che.

I Promessi Sposi.

THE next morning Isabella did come down to breakfast, but it was a great effort, and she soon relaxed into her former habits. Engagements previously formed could not be broken through, and one engagement led to another. Occasionally, however, Fanny persuaded her to give up one or two of the many evening-parties, and she succeeded in making her rather more quiet in the morning, so that her husband sometimes found her at liberty, and he could sit down and converse upon the passing events.

When he was alone with Fanny he almost invariably talked over his future prospects, and attributed to her every symptom of improvement in his wife. Though these thanks and praises fell on her ear as the most delightful music, still she felt rather uneasy at the kind of understanding that existed between them. Though the subject was one so wholly unconnected with herself, and so conducive to his future conjugal felicity, she could not help a guilty consciousness, when, upon the entrance of Isabella, they changed the topic of their conversation. She resolved, when once she had accomplished the grand object of persuading Isabella to take up her abode at Fordborough Castle, she would rescue herself from her trying situation, return to her father's house, and devote herself with redoubled energy to being the consolation and solace of his widowed home,

London was growing thin. Balls became more rare; water-parties more frequent; well-laden carriages, awfully encumbered with wells, imperials, boots, trunks, and bonnet-boxes, &c., were constantly seen whirling along the streets. One day they happened all three to be standing at the window debating whether the weather was sufficiently settled for Mrs. Clairville's rural fête to take place, when they were amused by watching the immense number of nurses, children, boxes, and bundles, which were crammed into an immense coach, one of the three carriages which were getting underweigh at the opposite door. Lord Delaford thought this would be a good moment to enter on the subject, by asking, in an easy tone, but well aware of the difficulties he was going to encounter,

"And when shall we go to Fordborough Castle, Isabella?"

"Heavens, Lord Delaford! London is just beginning to be agreeable. All the bores are gone, or going, and society is becoming really select, and every thing on an easy, sensible, pleasant footing. The sight we see opposite gives one a delightful promise of what London will be! Don't you hear that sound?" as the three carriages were set in motion, and rumbled heavily along the street. "Society will be as light and elastic when cleared of such heavy component parts, as the air after a thunder-storm!"

"And have you not had enough of society yet? I am almost sick of my fellow-creatures' faces, and yet I am no misanthrope! Do you not long to see green fields and trees, and flowers, and to smell the sweet smells of the country?"

"That is just the reason why I like water-parties, and excursions into the country, and Mrs. Clairville's breakfasts so much! How lovely the evening was as we rowed down the river from Richmond! and as for flowers, where can you see any half so beautiful as at Lady P——'s enchanting villa? You can have no taste, no refinement, if you do not doubly enjoy all the beauties of nature in the society of the most polished, the most gifted, in short, of the master spirits of the age! to say nothing of all the prettiest women."

"I do not wish to see all the pretty women;" and he added with some bitterness, "I only wish to see one woman, who, if she was as perfect in mind as she is in person, would be all-sufficient for my happiness; though," and his tone changed to one of deep mortification, "I see how little I am so to hers," and he left the room.

Isabella was somewhat startled. Fanny looked at her with a beseeching face of woe, and eyes full of tears.

"You are playing a dangerous game, Isabella. Heaven grant you may not repent it! You have nearly destroyed the happiness of one of the most perfect of human beings. Heaven grant you may not alter his nature too! Heaven grant that may remain unchanged! To see his kindly temper soured, his manly character degraded into the mere obsequious husband of a London fine lady,—I beg your pardon, Isabella, but it would indeed be a melancholy sight!"

"You seem to take a very lively interest in his welfare," answered Isabella, a little frightened at the effect she had produced on her husband, and consequently half inclined to be pettish.

Fanny rejoined with warmth.

"Who can see one woman wilfully cast from her a fate which would be the summit of happiness to almost every other, and not feel warmly?"

"Why, Fanny, I never saw you so animated; I believe you have fallen in love with him yourself, and are envying me this same fate of mine."

Fanny's face became suddenly crimson. She had been carried away by her feelings—she had forgotten her own secret, she was so moved at seeing him mortified, and wounded, that she thought only of him.

Isabella's half-joking speech recalled it all to her; she felt betrayed, discovered, and her confusion knew no bounds. Isabella, surprised at the effect she had produced, in a moment recollected the suspicions she had once entertained, but she was just smarting under the mortification of finding she had over-calculated her complete influence over her husband, of finding that Fanny was right in her advice, and of feeling she deserved her rebuke, and she exclaimed,

"Well, I never saw such a guilty face."

Fanny was thunderstruck, bewildered—she burst into tears, and hiding her face in her hands, she exclaimed—

"Spare me, Isabella! spare me! If you have discovered my secret, spare me!" and throwing herself on her knees, she hid her face in Isabella's lap. "Yes, I have loved your husband, but I loved him before you thought of him, and I have struggled, and combated, and fought to subdue my feelings, indeed I have. And I have loved him with a holy love," and she lifted up her tearful face with an expression of solemn grief and earnestness which was almost sublime: "Yes! I call Heaven to witness, never, for a moment, have I ceased to wish for your happiness, to pray for it, to use every endeavour to forward it. Is it not true? Isabella, I appeal to yourself?"

"Get up, my dear Fanny! For Heaven's sake! I had not an idea—I did not mean—" and Isabella burst into tears also. She remembered, what she had almost forgotten, how she had once believed him attached to Fanny; she remembered, what she had often persuaded herself was not so, how she had used every art in her power to wean him from her, and she felt almost as guilty as Fanny did.

She had never intended to inflict such keen anguish on any one, and she was grieved to see what she had done. Had there been any thing to excite jealousy, or that might have touched her vanity, perhaps she would not have felt so amiably; but she was perfectly certain poor Fanny's love was unrequited, and there was nothing mortifying in her husband's having inspired so deep and fervent an attachment. Moreover, an uncontrolled burst of feeling, in a person habitually placid and reserved, is in itself almost an awful sight.

The two friends stood mutually abashed before each other, when Fanny exclaimed,

"Do not utterly despise me, Isabella. Oh, if you knew half what I feel at this moment, you would pity me. And I have been venturing to lecture you, to teach you your duty! But, indeed, I spoke from pure motives, indeed—though—I have—loved him—" and she again blushed crimson, her cheeks, her temples, her neck, at hearing herself speak words which, till that day, had never found utterance from her lips, "it was for your sake, as well as for his—"

"Dearest Fanny," interrupted Isabella, "do you think I doubt your motives? No! they are pure and excellent as your own innocent heart. I spoke in jest—you so entirely succeeded in concealing your feelings—"

"But do you not utterly despise me now? Me, whom you once thought retiring and dignified, to have been so lavish of my affections as to love one who is devoted to another, to pass my life nurturing a hopeless and an unlawful preference! Oh, that thought almost maddens me sometimes. You must look down upon me as a poor, abject, weak, and wicked creature."

"Fanny, don't speak so of yourself, you make me miserable—it is I who ought to beg your forgiveness—it is I who have been guilty towards you—my foolish, selfish vanity could not bear to see him prefer you, and I did all I could to take him away from you; but I had no idea you really cared about him so much; I only meant to try my own power; and then, if you had seemed unhappy, I would have desisted,—at least I

thought I would. But you appeared so cool, so indifferent; and then I liked him myself, and then I thought, if you cared so little, why there was no reason why I should give up so brilliant a *parti*, and then—I forgot all about you, and thought only of myself."

"You do think, then, he did like me once?"

"It was that which piqued me so much; but if I had known what you were feeling, dear Fanny—"

"Oh, Isabella, this is ridiculous! You are, as it were, defending yourself to me—to me who stand here self-betrayed—self-accused. Oh! it is all wrong; this must not be; we must forget all this—bury it in oblivion—let it be as though it had never been. Only make him happy, dearest Isabella, for your own sake—for his sake, and a little for my sake too. Make him happy, and I shall rejoice in the fate that has made you his wife—make him happy, as you value your own happiness and his in this world and the next. But I forget myself again. It is not for me to guide others—weak, erring, sinful creature that I am."

She sank on the sofa, and pressing her hands upon her eyes, and resting her head on the arm of the sofa, she strove to command and to subdue herself.

Isabella stood motionless beside her, in thought as deep and as painful. A mist seemed to have fallen from her sight. She looked on life with different eyes from what she had done an hour before.

The broken-hearted, quivering form before her, read her a lecture upon the effects of worldliness which she had never thought of before. She saw, for the first time, what havoc blighted affections might cause. She thought of her husband, and she said to herself, "Shall I, through my own wilful folly, cause the misery of two good and amiable beings? I have already blasted the prospects of one, shall I throw a blight over those of the other, and that other the being I have sworn to love as long as I have life? Shall I have robbed poor Fanny of what would have made her happiness, and shall I not value the prize myself?"

A flood of tender and self-reproachful feelings rushed over her soul. Fanny's grief cut her to the heart—she gazed upon her till she felt herself cruel and odious. She pictured to herself what sufferings she must have inflicted upon her during the days of her courtship, on her wedding-day, on a thousand other occasions; she remembered her unfailing, uncomplaining gentleness; she thought of the good advice she had given her at

various times, and felt how generous and how judicious it had been.

Seating herself by her side, she gently lifted her head from the sofa—she kissed her—she wept with her—she used every tender and endearing epithet—she implored her to be comforted.

“I am weeping for my own degradation,” she replied, “that the secret I scarcely dared own to myself should be uttered in positive words, and to you, to his wife!—and you will betray me to him, you will tell him, I am sure you will. Oh! that I should have come to this!—I, who hoped to have passed through life with a fair, untarnished name, though my wretched heart might break! Oh, Isabella! in pity keep my secret—spare me this last bitter drop in the cup of life! He respects me now, and I think it would kill me to be despised by him.”

Her broken voice was choked by sobs—she again hid her face in her hands—she seemed to shrink into herself.

“Dearest Fanny! what shall I say, what shall I do? If you knew how your anguish harrows my very soul! I will promise any thing, I will do any thing that can relieve your mind.”

“Will you indeed do any thing that I ask?” said Fanny, looking up from her tears with a face in which beamed a high and lofty hope: “Then, all I ask of you is, to be happy: and to be truly so, you must place all your happiness in him; you must let no other feelings interfere with what is conducive to his welfare, his respectability. Promise this, Isabella, and I ask no more.”

“I promise you, dearest Fanny!” and kneeling at her feet, her hands clasped, and laid on Fanny’s knees, Isabella solemnly repeated, “I promise you that, for your sake, as well as for his own, I will love, cherish, and obey him, in sickness and in health, in joy and in sorrow, in poverty or in wealth: I will strive to be unto him a loving, dutiful, and virtuous wife.”

“Thank you, my own Isabella!” exclaimed Fanny, and throwing themselves into each other’s arms, they mingled tears and embraces. At length Fanny added, “It is a weight off my mind that I have no longer any thing concealed from you, Isabella; and if I could but feel sure that you, and you only, should know my weakness—”

“Shall I promise?”

“Do, dearest Isabella; let me hear a vow of secrecy pass your lips, and I think it will go further towards eradicating every vestige of former folly than any thing else can do.”

“I promise you that no one word of this day’s conversation

shall pass my lips ; and I promise that, except by my future conduct, you shall never be reminded of it. Will that satisfy you ?”

“ Oh, yes, generous, kind, good Isabella. You are only too good, too kind, and make me feel so inferior to you.”

“ But, Fanny, we must make haste and go into the country. How soon can we go ? I wish we could set out to-morrow ; I long to begin my new career ; I am so afraid of growing worldly again in London,—I mean worldly in my inclinations ; my actions I can control, and my vow is sacred. But how shall I set about opening the subject to my husband ? He was really angry to-day.”

“ What so easy, dearest Isabella ? Go at once to him, and say you saw he was annoyed, and that you are sorry he was so, and that, rather than annoy him, you are ready to go whenever he wishes.”

“ He will think a very sudden change has come over me : however, I will try.”

That evening Fanny pleaded a headache, and went to bed. She was totally unfitted for society, and could not have ventured into Lord Delaford’s presence ; so that, when he came in, he found Isabella alone.

For the first time he wished for company ; he felt a *tête-à-tête* with his wife awkward and unpleasant. He was displeased and disappointed : it was evident to him he was not loved as he loved, and he was not yet worked up to the point of accomplishing by authority, what he fain would have accomplished by affection : his manner was cold and abstracted.

Isabella perceived that Fanny’s advice was not given before it was needed.

After a silence of some minutes, during which she had twisted a note into every variety of form of which a note is capable, and he had turned over the leaves of a very old review, in which there was not one entertaining article, she resolved to break the ice at once. Shaking back her long locks, she looked up in his face, and holding out her hand to him, she said—

“ I want to make friends, Henry.” Then, smiling with a frankness of manner, which, when combined with any thing of emotion, was in her almost irresistible—“ I don’t want to lose your affections by being obstinate and wilful, and I am ready to go into the country whenever you please.”

“ Are you in earnest, Isabella, or am I dreaming ?”

“ I am in real good earnest, and you had better take me in earnest, for fear my good resolutions should evaporate. I do

really wish to go into the country, and to be very good; as good as Fanny."

"But can you be happy with only me?"

"Why, I mean to try;" and she gave him a glance, such as a pretty woman can give when she feels she has regained her power, but means to use it in the most agreeable manner.

"Then I am the happiest of men!" said, and thought, Lord Delaford.

Reconciliation, joy, and peace of mind, are totally uninteresting; therefore, the sooner the present story is brought to a close, the better. Lord and Lady Delaford went almost immediately to Fordborough Castle—Fanny returned to her father. She experienced real pleasure in finding herself again at home, and in ministering to the comforts of her kind parent.

By some odd turn of the human mind, the avowal of her secret feelings to the very person towards whom they were an injury, went further towards eradicating them than all her own reflections and resolutions. Her conscience felt lighter; she looked back upon them as a matter of history; and her affection for Isabella had warmed into a real and ardent friendship. Every one loves a person whom they have served, essentially served; and every one loves a person over whose conduct they feel they have great influence.

One morning, Lord Delaford having rode over to Elmsley Priory, took an opportunity of telling Fanny that he was the happiest of men, and that he was aware he owed all this happiness to her. Then did Fanny enjoy pure and unalloyed satisfaction! She felt she had not lived in vain: she had been of service to her fellow-creatures, and she felt raised in her own estimation.

Isabella, meanwhile, laboured hard to put in practice all the good advice she had received from Fanny. The happiness she found she had the power of bestowing, repaid her for her self-denial in relinquishing the exciting pleasures of the great world; and before she had time to weary of her domesticity, she found herself in a situation which called forth other, and as tender feelings.

While she was in Italy, a premature confinement had prevented her knowing the engrossing affection of a mother, and had allowed her to plunge again into the vortex of dissipation.

A growing family is an excellent nostrum for keeping down an active, restless spirit. Time, health, and thoughts must be, in a great measure, devoted to their children, by those mothers who do not utterly neglect their duty; and the constant inter-

course with such a mind as Lord Delaford's, and the frequent visits which, after a time, Fanny paid at Fordborough Castle, gradually produced in her character a reformation of all that was reprehensible.

Fanny found new objects of interest in Isabella's children: she was full of occupation at home; she was her father's darling. Her life was a retired one, especially when Lord and Lady Delaford were in London in the spring; and as there are not many very charming *parties* in the immediate neighbourhood of Elmsley Priory, and as she would doubtless be somewhat difficult in her choice, and as she is no longer quite as young or as blooming as she has been, it is more than probable she may become a "single woman of a certain age."

Though such should be her fate, may she not be allowed to have an opinion, should "affairs of the heart" be discussed in her presence?

AN OLD TALE, AND OFTEN TOLD.

CHAPTER I.

*Amor che a null' amato, amar perdona
Mi prese del costui piacer si forte,
Che, come vedi, ancor non m'abbandona.*

DANTE:

OF late years education has become a subject of general care and attention. But there may be excess even in so amiable a feeling as the devotion of a parent to a child ; that very devotion may be productive of mischief to its object. No pains are spared in cultivating talents, in giving grace, accomplishments, useful information, deep learning ; but it may be a question whether the wholesome training of the feelings is as judiciously attended to as that of the understanding. May not the very importance attached to all concerning the young, lead them to think too much of themselves ? Unless they are early taught to consider the feelings of others, is not one strong motive for controlling their own (that most difficult and most necessary of all lessons) utterly neglected ? May not the excessive care taken to preserve the purity of the weaker sex sometimes lead to consequences the most opposite ?

When the follies, the frailties, the weaknesses of their nature are so carefully concealed from them, how can they acquire the habit of regulating feelings the very existence of which they have never learned, and against the errors of which therefore they can never have been cautioned ?

" 'Tis an old tale, and often told," yet, perhaps, the frequent occurrence of such events as are related in the following story, may induce one to look back to the possible causes of their frequency.

Colonel FitzEustace was a person peculiarly calculated to inspire an enthusiastic passion to a warm-hearted and devoted girl. He was a soldier, and had but lately returned from the

seat of war. The fame of his exploits had preceded his arrival, and in the social circle to which the young Eleanor Morton was admitted as she emerged from girlhood to womanhood, he was received as one of the brave defenders of his native land, to whom England owed her eminent position in the scale of nations.

Although military glory is in itself almost a passport to the female heart, its effect is certainly enhanced when the outward appearance is correspondingly heroic—and Colonel FitzEustace looked like a hero. The commanding step, the lofty brow, the dark flashing eye, which might almost gaze on the sun without being dazzled; the deep, clear, sonorous voice, the rapid yet distinct utterance, which seemed as if it could make its commands heard and obeyed, through the roar of cannon and the din of battle, combined to form the beau ideal of a warrior. And if that flashing eye should invariably beam with every softer expression, when it dwelt on one favoured object, if that clear deep voice should suddenly become modulated to the low thrilling tone of tenderness when it addressed one person, what marvel if the bewildered girl yielded up her whole soul to the new and engrossing feeling which stole upon her, under the mask of admiration and gratitude!

If ever love, fervent, pure, intense, found its shrine in the heart of woman, it did in that of Eleanor Morton. But Colonel FitzEustace was poor, and it was not till after many years of constancy on both sides, that her parents consented to their union. She had passed long months of absence, long days of sickening hope, long nights of watching, when by the death of a distant relation Colonel FitzEustace became heir presumptive to the earldom of Sotheron, and in the mean time the possession of a competency which enabled their marriage to take place.

Alas! It was not for Eleanor to know unmixed happiness. Climate and severe service had undermined her husband's constitution, and although they both fancied that the life of untroubled serenity they had before them would restore him to health, she had the mortification to see him daily become weaker, paler, thinner. She could not blind herself to his illness, but she fancied in the autumn, that the clear fresh air of winter would brace his feeble frame; in the winter, that the mildness of spring would give him renewed vigour; in the spring, that more settled weather would confirm his health; in summer, that autumn would bring the desired change.

When, however, that autumn came, she had really to sit by

his sick bed, to smooth his pillow, to watch his waning strength, and at length to hear him in distinct audible words, speak of their approaching separation. She had never, even in her imagination, admitted such an idea, far less ever imbodyed it in actual language. When first he spoke, she tried to smile,—a faint incredulous smile. But no! She looked on his haggard cheek, and the appalling truth was there too visibly written. She sat motionless, speechless. Nor did tears come to her relief till he alluded to the prospect of her becoming a mother—then the floodgates were opened—she sobbed convulsively, she covered his emaciated hand with kisses—she hid her head.

From that moment she never left his room; she scarcely ever took her eyes off him. She would not allow any of her family to be summoned, for she seemed to dread the participation of another in her attendance; she would have been jealous of his receiving attention or service from any hand but her own. She wished to catch every sound of his voice, to hoard up each word, each look, in her memory, as a treasure for after-years. The moment came—he died, and she survived.

Three months afterward she became the widowed mother of a boy. That moment of rapture when a mother's eyes are blessed with a sight of her firstborn, was to her a moment of agony. Then her loss seemed to burst upon her with redoubled force. She thought of the happiness she had anticipated, of the tenderness with which her husband would have hailed the intelligence of her safety, of the pride with which he would have looked upon his boy, and she almost turned away in anguish.

This was but a passing feeling. The next instant she clasped the infant to her bosom, she felt as if the beloved of her soul was not wholly torn from her, she had something still to live for, something to which her existence was necessary, and the whole affections of that loving and blighted heart were poured forth upon the unconscious infant. She recovered slowly, but she did recover.

Time wore away. She was still young, and might have hoped for happiness in a second marriage—but hers was no common love. It had taken root in early life, it had been nurtured in sorrow, almost in hopelessness,—it had for many long years been her thought by day, her dream by night; it was so interwoven with her existence that it could not be destroyed but with herself. Devotion to her child, to *his* child, alone afforded relief to her sorrow and her love. She remembered all the treasured words of him who was gone, she thought over all the plans they had together formed for her

little Walter's education, and she considered no sacrifice too great that might by possibility be conducive to his health, or to his advantage. Alas! by so doing perhaps she only fostered feelings which, in after-life, led to most unfortunate results.

In the common acceptance of the word, she did not spoil her boy. She never gave him the plaything he cried for; she never yielded to his entreaties in allowing him what she imagined could be hurtful either to his body or his mind; but every action of her own, and of every one belonging to her, had reference to him alone.

The best room in the house was his sleeping-apartment, as being the most airy and wholesome; the largest sitting-room was appointed for his playing nursery; if he looked pale, an air of consternation pervaded the whole household; if he was naughty, the wretchedness of his mother was reflected in the serious faces of his attendants; if he was good, every one appeared revived; and rewards and pleasures were provided, however inconvenient it might be to gratify his fancy of the moment.

Those who were interested for his mother, and wished to gratify her feelings, knew that she was only accessible to pleasurable emotions through her boy, and they vied with each other in attentions and kindness to him.

Nothing could be more natural, more amiable, than the widowed mother's devotion to her only child; and she fancied that she was training his mind to all that was right and virtuous, for these indulgences were rewards for good behaviour. Alas! in her anxious tenderness, one great lesson was neglected. She forgot to impress upon his mind that he was only one of many creatures, all equal in the sight of their Creator. Walter necessarily felt that the universe was formed for him alone, and that every thing ought to be subservient to his welfare.

He was a beautiful and an intelligent boy, with all his mother's depth and tenderness of feeling; with all his father's energy in accomplishing his purpose; but being accustomed to find those vehement feelings, those energies, the ruling principle of the little world around him, he early learned to rule over that little world with the most despotic sway. He loved his mother; but he loved her as tyrants love that which ministers to their pleasure. She did not dive so deeply into his little heart, satisfied with feeling herself necessary to his happiness. Her gentle and habitually melancholy countenance could be

lighted up with joy at any proof of affection on his part ; and she looked round with proud exultation when he cried, and wept aloud at the prospect of her leaving him to pass a few days with a friend. She did not leave him. She yielded to this passionate expression of his ungoverned feelings, and by so doing confirmed him in the habitual indulgence of them.

The period came when it was deemed proper that he should go to school. This was a severe trial ; but here her duty was plain before her. She knew that it would be sacrificing her boy's welfare to her own gratification, if she persisted in keeping him at home.

At ten years old he went to Eton ; and here his natural talents, and his animated disposition, soon made him a favourite with his master and with his companions. Now for almost the first time, Eleanor tasted unalloyed happiness. She was proud of her son ; she heard him praised by his superiors ; she knew he was loved by his comrades ; and when he returned for the holidays, she looked on him with a thrill of rapture, such as she had never expected to feel again. Of course, no indulgence could be too great for her good, her clever boy. Every wish was gratified, every request forestalled. For some years she was comparatively a happy woman.

Walter increased in health and strength, and beauty and talents. He was impetuous, but that was natural in youth ; he could not bear to be thwarted, but then his wishes were generally the offspring of some amiable feeling. If he saw distress, his was the open hand to relieve it. Though he might perhaps give a guinea to a ragged impostor, and have not a sixpence left to bestow on a starving and industrious family, this was only the excess of a generous impulse. How could he be blamed for yielding to it ?

He left Eton with the character of an excellent scholar, and of a fine fellow. He passed through his career at Oxford with more than common credit, and his friends augured that he might one day make a figure in public life. His future prospects were brilliant, and he was in possession of a fortune which rendered him independent of any profession, but which was not sufficient to stand in lieu of a profession. A large landed property, well attended to, and well administered, is occupation in itself, and affords scope for great utility ; but there is a certain medium which prevents exertion, and enables a person to pass a life of most complete idleness.

Such was Walter FitzEustace's situation, when at twenty-one he plunged into the vortex of London dissipation, with an

ardent imagination, impetuous temper, amiable, but ill-regulated feelings, and a strong determined will, which had never been controlled, and would never brook control. These were faults which might lead to much mischief, but which could not make him less beloved by a doting mother. This was a disposition to make him fearfully the slave of love, should it once gain dominion over him. However, he returned to his adoring mother in the summer with heart as light, and eyes as gay and careless as when he left her. She was overjoyed to have him once more by her side ; once more to lean on his arm when she took her evening stroll, and to look up in his beaming face, and trace in those noble features the form, the expression of his father's ; to listen to his animated accounts of debates in Parliament ; to see his cheek glow, and his eye flash fire as he talked of liberty, of justice ; and to anticipate the moment when the talents of which there seemed to be so rich a promise might excite admiration in the senate.

CHAPTER II.

Nous, qui sommes bornées en tout, comment le sommes nous si peu quand il s'agit de souffrir ?

MARIVAUX.

THE following spring FitzEustace again passed the season in London. He had been disappointed in his hopes of being returned for a borough ; the scenes of dissipation which had completely occupied him the first year, had lost their power to interest, and his animated nature was beginning to feel the want of some fresh excitement, when he became acquainted with Lady Ellersville.

She had been married about three years to a dull, proud, cold, handsome man, whom she neither liked nor disliked. Let it not be imagined that her character was therefore necessarily cold and heartless. She had been brought up in the seclusion of her school-room. She had not been allowed to associate with other girls for fear of contamination ; she had read no books that had not been previously perused with care by her mother or her governess. Her time had been divided between her masters, and the proper exercise for her health ;

but in these walks she had never visited the cottages of the poor, lest she might be exposed to infection, or hear tales of woe that might be injurious to the innocence of her pure unsullied mind.

The school-room was apart from the rest of the house, and she had never been permitted to leave it except at stated and appointed times. Nor were any visitors admitted within the sacred precincts to interrupt the course of her studies. When with her parents, she was treated with all kindness and affection, but she had nothing in common with them. She knew not their objects of interest, their friends were almost unknown to her except by sight, she could not enter into the subjects of their conversation, and when she came forth into the world, she had learned as many languages, read as much history, acquired as many accomplishments as any young lady of her age, and had reflected as little upon any subject that has to do with real life. She imagined, as many girls do, that marriage was as much the object of being brought out, as dancing is the object of going to a ball, and looking well the object of dressing for that ball.

When, therefore, Lord Ellersville proposed to her, and was considered by her parents as an unexceptionable *parti*, young, handsome, rich, she accepted him calmly, dutifully, and without hesitation. She meant to love him, knowing it was right so to do, and she persuaded herself that she really did like him very much. In high life, romance is not the besetting sin of very young ladies. Their characters do not unfold, like Ondine, they do not find out they have a soul until it is sometimes too late. Matches, apparently the most worldly and heartless, are occasionally formed by those in the recesses of whose hearts the warmest affections, the most disinterested feelings are lying dormant. Often, very often, their minds are well regulated, their principles strong, and these affections, if they cannot find vent in love for their husbands, concentrate themselves on their children. But alas! too often also they lead to the most lamentable results.

Lord Ellersville unfortunately was not formed to attach such a woman as Maria. He was devoted to field-sports. In August he repaired to the Moors to shoot grouse, from whence he only returned when partridge-shooting commenced, and later in the season he went to Melton with a perfect stud of horses. This was not flattering to a young and lovely woman. Her vanity was mortified. In the spring he attended the House of Lords regularly, although he never spoke, and

his vote merely served to strengthen the government majorities. Women are alive to fame of all kinds, and if her husband had distinguished himself, Lady Ellersville was one of those who would have lived upon his glories, for there was a fund of loftiness in her nature which would have enabled her to make pride in her husband supply the place of love for him. When with her he was careless and indifferent, for having married at the instigation of his mother, in order that the honours of Ellersville might not become extinct, her principal claim upon his affection, or rather his consideration, ceased, when the young heir was snatched by death from its doting mother.

There is something in maternity that opens the heart to all kindly emotions of every sort, and it was not till she lost her child that Lady Ellersville first felt what a blank and cheerless existence was that of the unloved wife of an unloved husband. She then first owned to herself that she did not, could not, love the man to whom her fate was united, but that there did exist within her warm and ardent feelings, which now must never be called forth.

A fearful barrier is broken down when such a confession is made in the secret soul. Pride, however, was one ruling principle in her nature, and she resolved that no one should perceive that she imagined herself neglected, or that she felt mortified. She mixed in the world. She wished to show her husband that she had charms for others, and she gloried in the train of admirers that the fascination of her person and manners attracted around her. She thought pride must ever secure her against any weakness. Alas! pride is a poor substitute for principle. Walter had heard of her as the admired Lady Ellersville, who piqued herself upon her indifference, and upon her powers of attracting, without courting, the homage of the other sex.

He soon became one of her train, and almost as soon, tired of being only one among many on whom she lavished the varied charms of her conversation. He could not endure to be thus confounded among the crowd. He wished to ascertain that she considered him as superior to the common herd of empty young men, and to do so he naturally put forth all his powers of pleasing. His eye was more animated, his jest more pointed, his political opinions expressed with more eloquence when she was present.

Had any one said to him, you are leading a virtuous woman from the path of duty, he would have denied the imputation with horror. Yet such was indeed the fact. Scarcely a day

elapsed in which they did not see each other, though without any preconcerted plan on either side ; and the ball, the assembly, seemed dull and insipid at which he did not meet the lively, the agreeable, the lovely Lady Ellersville. He began to feel indignant that the man who was united to such a woman should appear so little aware of the treasure he possessed. He then wondered whether she had ever loved him ; whether she had ever preferred anybody ; whether, if circumstances had not prevented her indulging such a feeling, she could ever have liked him.

His thoughts became wholly engrossed by her ; when she was present he had no eyes, no ears for any one else ; and although he never breathed a word which could alarm the most rigid virtue, the tact with which all human beings are endowed upon that subject gave her heart the delightful consciousness of being loved, though nothing was said which forced such a conviction upon her understanding.

The refinements of polished life threw a halo round the first approaches of vice. Of vice, which, if it appeared in its own form, would be recognised as such, and avoided with loathing ; but it assumes the mask of all that is harmless and engaging—innocent conversation, gay sociability, and does not throw off the disguise till it has already made deep inroads on the peace and on the morals.

To the fallen and degraded, whom distress, misfortune, friendlessness may have driven to a life from which their conscience and their feelings often revolt, how wilfully, how wantonly criminal must the pampered minion of luxury appear, who errs in the midst of plenty, pleasure, honour ! Alas ! it is that very profusion which gives leisure to the heart and the imagination to go astray. The lowly know not the dangers to which the great are exposed. Still less can the great estimate the temptations to which the poor and friendless are liable. Let each be lenient to their erring sisters ! Nor let those who, united to the object of their choice, are happy in the interchange of mutual affection, exult too proudly in their irreproachable character and untarnished reputation. Rather let them thankfully and humbly acknowledge the mercy that has cast their lot where their inclination and their duty coincide ; which has spared them the misery of warm feelings sent back upon the ardent heart which gave them birth, and the temptation of meeting with kindness where it would be sinful to indulge the emotions such kindness is calculated to excite.

Why should I trace the progress of events unfortunately of

too common occurrence? Walter was the first whose eyes were opened to the nature of his own feelings ; but Lady Ellersville, whose heart, under her guarded exterior, was teeming with all the affections which are doomed to form the joy and respectability, or the misery and degradation of woman, at length made the fatal confession to herself. She would have avoided him, and sought safety in flight, but Walter was too little in the habit of self-denial quietly to relinquish the society he found necessary to his happiness. Had Mrs. Fitz-Eustace been aware what were the dangers to which her son's morals and his welfare were exposed, how little would she have rejoiced in his accession to the earldom of Sotheron, an event which occurred about this period, and which promised to afford scope for those talents which were his mother's pride. She had scarcely allowed her heart to dilate with the pleasurable emotions from which even her chastened spirit could not defend itself, when she was doomed to a new and unlooked-for sorrow.

The assumed coldness of Lady Ellersville only excited and increased the ardour of Walter's passion, for he loved her with the uncontrolled vehemence which characterized all his feelings.

The sequel may easily be guessed! The moment came, when the confession locked in the secret bosom of each was made to the other. Lord Ellersville at length became jealous and umbrageous. Her proud spirit could not endure to quail under the glance of a man she despised. To avoid suspicion, she plunged into actual guilt.

Oh! if those who headlong follow their own impulses could pause to contemplate the misery they inflict! What were the past sorrows of Eleanor FitzEustace to the agony she now endured, when her son, the consolation of her widowhood, the pride of her heart, to whose future career she looked forward with high aspirations after fame and honour, whose name, when it was mentioned, made her faded countenance light up with a gleam of exultation, became a degraded and sinful man ; that name avoided by her acquaintance, and only mentioned by her friends in a low, subdued, mysterious voice!

Those only who have felt the delightful, trembling hopes of a parent, who have witnessed the gradual unfolding of the infant mind, watched the ripening intellect, revelled in the anticipation of future excellencce, can estimate the full measure of wretchedness which now overwhelmed the unfortunate Eleanor.

Meanwhile, were the erring pair happy? No! after the first

wild tumult of mingled emotions had subsided, Lord Sotheron attempted to write to his mother. But many days elapsed before he could bring himself to finish a letter which he felt it possible to send to his virtuous, his devoted, his broken-hearted parent. From that moment began the punishment of their misconduct. He was not accustomed to conceal his feelings, in order to spare those of another. Restless and agitated himself, he tore the unfinished scrawls to pieces; he paced the apartment with hasty strides, not remembering that every sign of uneasiness in him was a severe pang through Maria's heart.

Fearful of being recognised, shrinking from the eye of her very menials, Lady Ellersville experienced all the tortures that persons naturally proud and susceptible, yes, and naturally virtuous, must endure, when conscious that every one has a right to look down upon them.

Under a feigned name they resided at an obscure watering-place, anxiously expecting the moment when the divorce should pass, and hoping that she might at least become the wife of Lord Sotheron before the birth of a child, whose illegitimacy would be a lasting reproach to them. Unfortunately, by some unlooked-for circumstances, the divorce did not pass till the following session, and a boy was born, in whose unconscious face its mother could not look without a feeling of guilt towards the innocent child.

Lord Sotheron meanwhile was listless and unoccupied; he was never unkind, but his mode of life was little suited to an animated young man in the very flower of manhood, and he could not, indeed he did not often attempt, to veil his ennui. She was bowed down with humiliation; she could not exert herself. Where were all her brilliancy, her wit, the variety, the grace of her conversation, which had so enchanted all around? She felt she was dull, and that he on whom her every hope depended would be driven to other society for amusement. She strove to be entertaining, but how different was that forced pleasantry from the gayety of a mind at ease, inspired by the consciousness of success and admiration. He guessed her motive, and for a moment exerted himself to appear amused. But how different also was that forced laugh from the admiring glance which once beamed applause at her every word, which unconsciously followed her every movement.

In wedded life there is a thousand common subjects of interest, little domestic concerns to be discussed; preparation

for the reception of friends to be arranged ; there are a thousand pleasing recollections of past scenes of enjoyment, and anticipations of the prospects of their children, which prevent the tête-à-tête from wearying those whose characters and tempers are really in unison. But Walter and Lady Ellersville had no friends to prepare for, none to talk of, in all the unrestrained confidence of intimacy—they could not revert to past scenes without recalling those from whom she was for ever divided ; they could not retrace the first dawns of their mutual affection, without reviving the recollection of errors over which they would gladly draw a veil ; and then—they dared not allude to the future lot of their child, for that was a subject of unmingled pain to both.

CHAPTER III.

And is this eye with tears o'erfraught,
 To thine no longer known ?
 This eye that read the tender thought
 Erewhile soft trembling in thine own ;
 By thee, alas ! to weep since taught,
 And all its lustre flown ?

Unpublished Poems.

At length the divorce passed, and Maria became the wife of him whom she loved with increasing tenderness, for all she had given up for his sake only endeared him the more to her. Man, on the contrary, though he may feel kindness, pity, gratitude, to woman, for the sacrifices she has made to him, considers her as in some measure responsible for those he has made to her.

Maria was now for the first time to see Lord Sotheron's mother. Mrs. FitzEustace, though bowed down by this last heavy affliction, was too gentle to be soured by it. She promised to receive her, when once she was really her daughter-in-law. She only wished to contribute, as far as in her lay, to the welfare or the comfort of the beloved son who, though no longer the pride and joy of her heart, was still to her the most precious thing on earth.

What were Maria's feelings as she drew near the abode of

that devoted mother, whose fate, already sad, she had so utterly blasted ? when she thought of presenting to her a grandchild who might not bear the name to which the eldest son of Lord Sotheron ought to have been entitled ? No village bells were ringing to greet their arrival, no old and faithful servants crowding the door to welcome their master's bride. She thought of her reception at Ellersville Castle. The approach was thronged with villagers, the air resounded with the chimes of the neighbouring parishes, the castle terrace was surrounded with the tenantry, the great steps were lined with servants, all eager to show attention to their new lady. She was then happy, thoughtless, innocent, she could then look back into herself without remorse or shame, and she felt, as the carriage drew up at Mrs. FitzEustace's door, and as they waited till the servant answered the bell, that not all the fervour and depth of her devotion to Walter could compensate, even in this world, for the loss of self-esteem, and of respectability in the eyes of others.

They were ushered into the drawing-room by a gray-headed man who greeted Walter with respectful but serious affection. He said he would let his mistress know. They heard the doors open and shut rapidly, hurried steps in the passage, the whispering of subdued female voices, still Mrs. FitzEustace did not appear ; and they felt that his mother had need to summon all her courage for the dreaded interview. At length she entered, and her subdued, mild, broken-hearted countenance, went more to Maria's heart than all she had hitherto experienced.

Mrs. FitzEustace embraced her son with the tenderest affection ; she kissed Maria, she took her grandchild in her arms, she did every thing that kindness could prompt, but they saw the quivering lip, they heard the unsteady voice, and Maria's shame and remorse nearly overpowered her. Mrs. FitzEustace asked some indifferent questions about the weather and the journey, and Maria answered it was hot or cold, the journey long or short, without knowing what she uttered. Lord Sotheron, anxious to escape from a position that was so unpleasant to him, left the room, and they remained alone. A few more attempts were made to keep up a languishing conversation, Maria longed to throw herself at the feet of Walter's mother, and there to breathe forth all her agony of self-accusation, and to implore her pardon for the sorrow she had brought upon her gray hairs ; but there was a gentle reserve about the

grief of Eleanor that awed while it touched, that repressed all outpourings of the heart while it deeply interested, and Maria took refuge in busying herself over the baby till Mrs. Fitz-Eustace proposed to show her her room.

When Maria at length found herself alone, she gave way to tears that were perhaps more bitter than any she *had hitherto* shed. She *had* wept for herself, she had wept her fault, she had wept her degradation, but never did she feel that degradation so acutely as at this moment. Her sorrows appeared to her such guilty ones, that they revolted her; while Eleanor's, on the contrary, wore a character of holiness, of sanctity. And that she should have filled the measure of her bitter cup, that she should have crushed the broken spirit! oh! it was almost too much for endurance.

The dressing-bell rang. It is wonderful how much those who have lived in the world, and whose feelings may be least under the salutary control of principle, mechanically submit to that of *les convenances* of society. She repressed her tears, she calmed her sobs, dressed herself, and went down to dinner with a composed voice and tranquil manner. The dinner was as uncomfortable as one might expect it to be, under the existing circumstances; the succeeding days were passed in the same restraint. The moment never came in which they alluded to past events, and although they all felt kindly towards each other, there was not the free interchange of thought which alone renders a domestic circle truly happy.

It was not till they had resided for some months under the same roof that the barrier of reserve between them was broken down.

Soon after the birth of a second boy, Maria was lying on her sofa, while the young Edward was playing on the floor. Eleanor caught the expression of anguish with which Maria gazed on the eldest; their eyes met, and that glance revealed to each all that was passing in the mind of the other. At that moment all coldness, all reserve, were broken through. Throwing herself at the feet of her mother-in-law, and hiding her face in her hands, Maria sobbed out, "Forgive me! oh, forgive me! pardon the ruin I have brought on your son, the disgrace I have brought on your grandchild! No—no! it is impossible! kind and gentle as you are, you must—you must hate me, as well as despise me."

Touched and alarmed at this agony, Mrs. FitzEustace raised her, soothed her, bade her be composed. But having once opened upon the subject, she poured forth all the pent

up feelings of remorse and shame that had so long been consuming her. They mingled their tears, and Eleanor's gentle words of compassion and forgiveness restored her to something like composure.

From this time, there was no thought of her soul hidden from her mother-in-law, and Mrs. FitzEustace's maternal partiality saw, in the irresistible attractions of her son, an excuse for Maria's fault, which made pity almost usurp the place of blame. It became the mother's task to console her who had blighted all the prospects of that beloved son ; for Maria saw and felt too well that the life of aimless, listless idleness that Lord Sotheron led was affecting his spirits, his temper, and his character ; she knew and felt to her heart's core that her eldest boy would always have to struggle against the flaw in his birth.

By Eleanor's advice, they resolved to pass some time on the continent, till the painful notoriety at present attached to their name had in some measure subsided, and it was not till after the lapse of two or three years that they took possession of their magnificent mansion of Stonebury.

Many were the family discussions to which the arrival of Lord and Lady Sotheron gave rise. The gay wished to participate in the society which they thought would probably be assembled at Stonebury ; the easy and good-natured understood that Lady Sotheron had conducted herself with the greatest propriety since her present marriage, and were inclined to forget any past misconduct ; the vulgar enjoyed the opportunity of protecting a person of rank and fortune. On the other hand, the rigid urged the unanswerable argument, that unless a decided line be drawn between virtue and vice, there must be an utter end of all morality in the land. They naturally were shocked that the woman who had abandoned all her duties, should be at the head of society, enjoying rank, fortune, and even respectability.

Alas ! If they could have read the heart of her whose worldly prosperity thus excited their virtuous indignation, they would have found her as much an object of pity as those who have erred should ever be, to those who need not shrink from the reproaches of conscience or the judgment of their fellow-creatures. Not one of these visits passed without some occurrence which, to a sensitive mind, gave exquisite pain.

Children are usually a great resource during the formal quarter of an hour which precedes a dinner in the country, and on one of these occasions, a young lady, in talking to the

eldest boy, called him Lord Stonebury. This touched Maria where she was most vulnerable, when the young lady's mother immediately addressing the younger boy by the title of Lord Stonebury, covered her with tenfold confusion. It proved that her story was all known, and all remembered, and she who was once the high-bred, the self-possessed Lady Ellersville, whose manner of receiving her company had been the admiration of the most polished society, was awkward, hurried; she addressed people by wrong names, did not hear when she was spoken to; there was a restlessness in her eye, and a rapidity in her utterance, very unlike the careless grace with which, without appearing to do any thing, she once contrived to put every one at their ease. She feared she was not civil enough, and a sensation of humility prompted her to change her seat for the purpose of addressing some one to whom she had not already spoken,—then a movement of pride made her spirit rebel at so courting vulgar people, who would once have thought themselves honoured by a passing acknowledgment from her. This gave her manner an air of constraint. There was something out of keeping, and many wondered where was the charm of address which had been reckoned so bewitching.

On another occasion the conversation happened to turn on the comparative beauty of the Lady D——s. One person remarked, that she "had always thought poor Lady Anne's countenance the most attractive of all." "I never saw her," observed another, who had lately taken a place in the neighbourhood. "Oh, no! She married unfortunately, poor thing! and ran away with Captain B——. It was a sad business."

Maria's burning face betrayed her confusion. The lady had scarcely uttered the unfortunate words, when she recollected before whom she was speaking. She stopped short, and a dead silence prevailed. She tried hastily to speak on some other subject, but every one felt awkward, and her unassisted efforts again subsided into silence. Lady Sotheron, distressed at the allusion, was confounded at its being seized by others, and the whole evening was to her one of painful endurance. At other times she suffered almost equally from the studious avoidance of topics that might in any way be applicable to herself. In solitude her reflections were all bitter, and in society something constantly occurred which brought her situation more painfully to her recollection.

Walter meantime found his home disagreeable. He was
 1 of his own selection, and who were not in
 He determined to repair to London,

to attend the House of Lords, and to seek interest and excitement in the line which he had often been told he was formed to pursue with success. Maria was delighted at this resolution. She felt that if he could fulfil an honourable political career, she should not be so guilty of having blasted his fate ; his mother might once more be proud of her only child, instead of mourning in secret over his blighted prospects.

They went to London, and Lord Sotheron again mixed in the society he at once liked and adorned. His spirits revived, his eager temper was on fire, and he gave himself up to politics with an ardour the more vehement from the state of indolent vacuity in which he had latterly passed his time. She was rejoiced to see those eyes again beam with animation, to perceive energy in every movement, instead of the listless languor she had so often deplored. She scarcely remarked that she passed hours, days alone, so engrossed was she in his interests ; and when he made a brilliant and successful maiden speech, she felt proud, nay, almost happy, and wrote to his mother with more confidence than she had ever done before.

Lord Sotheron soon became a person of some importance, and he was invited to all the political dinners of the party to which he had attached himself. He thought it necessary to give dinners in return—and now arose discussions which made Maria's situation more galling to her than ever. The wives of these great personages did not visit her, and how awkward to preside at one of these grand entertainments with no ladies to support her, except the two or three who from family connexions associated with her, but who were in nowise connected with the persons whom Walter wished to cultivate. Her sensitive mind recoiled from the whole discussion.

She intreated him to give only men dinners : not to struggle after that which they could not accomplish, and she assured him she had rather remain in her own room, than go through the mortifications and difficulties that must attend her making one of the party. He but faintly opposed her resolution, for in fact, ambition had taken possession of his soul, and he blindly followed its impulses. His time was completely occupied with debates, committees, dinners, which became more and more frequent, and Maria sat in her boudoir, eating her solitary morsel, and hearing the bustle of the servants waiting upon the party feasting below. Still she would not let herself repine at his having at length found scope for his talents. She would not wish it otherwise, but she could not help feeling miserable.

She attended still more to her children. They were always

with her, and in their infantine prattle she often found pleasure; but even from that source she occasionally drank the bitter draught of shame. One day they had just returned from a walk in the square, where they had been playing with some young companions, when Edward said to her, "Mamma, why don't they call me lord? That little boy in blue says he is called lord because he is the eldest. Now, I am the eldest, and yet Charles and Emily are called lord and lady, and I am not."

This was more than she could endure. She tried to murmur something, but her lips refused to move, her tongue to utter. She blushed, she quailed under the innocent inquiring eye of her child. She hid her face in his curly locks, she drew him closer to her, she smothered him with kisses, she wept over him, she sobbed, till the child, frightened at the violent emotions he had so unconsciously excited, felt there was a mystery, and ever after avoided the subject with that precocious tact which children so often evince.

Another time he was reading a childish History of England, and when he came to a passage that treated of hereditary succession, he said, "Yes—the kingdom descends to the king's eldest son, as papa's land will descend to me;" anxious, as children always are, to illustrate by some familiar example. She thrilled through every nerve, but she thought it would be too cruel to bring him up in this error, from which he must one day be painfully undeceived. She summoned up all her courage, and without daring to reflect on what might be his next question, she forced herself to utter, "My dear! you will not inherit your father's lands." There was a constrained solemnity in the tone which awed the boy. He felt he was on forbidden ground, and he said no more.

CHAPTER IV.

For I have drunk the cup of bitterness,
And having drunk therein of heavenly grace,
I must not put away the cup of shame.

SOUTHEY.

YEARS rolled on. Lord Sotheron was more and more engrossed in public affairs, and the time at length arrived when Maria regretted those days when he was unknown, and unno-

ticed, but when she at least enjoyed the society of him for whom she had sacrificed every thing.

Her boys went to a public school. It was not till they had been there for some time, that Maria remarked there was a great change in Edward. His spirits, which had been constantly and exuberantly gay, were now only occasionally elevated. His temper, formerly mild and even, was now sometimes stern and morose ; if his brother thwarted him, he yielded immediately, but it was with a sort of proud humility. Instead of asking the servants to mend any of the implements of his boyish amusements, and applying to them for all the various little services so often asked, and so willingly performed, he would pass whole days mending his own tools ; he would walk off to the village to get his knife sharpened, and scrupulously pay for it ; in short, there seemed to pervade every action a desire not to be beholden to any one. He was tender to his mother, fond of his sister, kind to his brother ; still there was something unsatisfactory in his manner.

His pursuits were solitary ; he did not want the companionship of his brother : and Charles, in his turn, would say, " Oh ! Edward goes his own way, so I shall go mine." It sometimes occurred that both could not ride, or that both could not shoot, or that there was only one place in the carriage, on some excursion of pleasure. On such occasions, Edward invariably said he preferred staying at home. At length the feeling that was rankling in the bosom of the elder boy was inadvertently betrayed.

Edward had seated himself next to his mother at dinner, when Charles said laughingly, " This is too bad, Edward ; you sat by mamma yesterday ; it is not fair play. Come, turn out !"

With a flushed cheek, and an angry eye, the colour mounting to his very temples, he exclaimed, in a tone but little justified by the occasion :—

" I won't. I have as good a right as you to sit by my mother at least. From *this* place you shall not turn me out."

Charles answered, " Why, Edward, you are grown so crabbed, I don't know what has come to you ; however, I shall have merrier play-fellows than you when I get back to school."

Maria more than suspected that Edward had learned the history of his own birth ; and she also perceived that the indignant sense of honour, and the independent spirit, which, if properly directed, might lead to all that is most brilliant and

admirable, were likely, in Edward's unfortunate circumstances, to spoil a disposition naturally amiable and noble.

Oh! how painfully did it then strike her, that her fault was thus visited upon her children! She saw the probability of disunion between the brothers, and it was only by true and cordial affection that their relative situations could be sweetened to either of them. She reflected deeply and bitterly upon the subject. Profiting perhaps by the errors in her own education, she had long come to the conclusion that the best mode of fitting human creatures for the world in which they are to live, and the station they are to fill in that world, is to tell them the truth upon all subjects, and to make them acquainted with the feelings and interests of their parents.

On all other topics she had done so, as much as possible; but in this instance, could she herself be the person to lay bare her own, and their father's errors? And yet, if Edward already knew the fact of his illegitimacy, it were better he should learn to view his mother with pity than with contempt; better he should know how truly she repented her fault, than imagine she was hardened in guilt; better that Charles should learn his own superior prospects in a manner that should open and soften his heart towards his brother. And then her daughter Emily! Would it not be cruel to leave her in ignorance of her mother's situation till she came out into the world, when the painful truth must be forced upon her in the most humiliating manner, by a thousand inevitable circumstances?

She confided her mental struggles to Mrs. FitzEustace, who almost constantly resided at Stonebury, and from whom she had now no hidden thought.

Eleanor kindly offered to spare her the painful task; but she recalled to her the restraint that had chilled their intercourse, while the one subject of strong and mutual interest had been avoided; and she also reminded her, how, from the moment they had poured out their hearts to each other, all coldness, all reserve, had vanished for ever.

"How necessary is it, then, that I and my children should understand each other's hearts! - Yes, whatever it may cost me, I will tell them all; and if by suffering guilt may be atoned, I shall thus, in some degree, expiate my offence, for Heaven alone can judge how keenly I shall suffer!"

Lord Sotheron had been for some time absent, nor was he likely to return. His party had lately come into power, and he was eagerly desirous of a public situation of trust, for which his talents particularly fitted him. His absences were become

so frequent, and of such long duration, that Maria had lost the habit of referring her every action to him.

Emily was thirteen, and Edward fifteen; when Maria one morning summoned them all three to her dressing-room. Her cheek was pale; her eye, though sad, was resolved. She called each to her side, and she imprinted upon each smooth open brow, a fervent kiss. Then clasping her hands, she uttered:—

“May God bless you, my children, and strengthen you and preserve you in that innocence which is the only thing to be truly and earnestly prayed for! May he in his mercy bless you! My children, the blessing of a mother is good for the souls of her children, let that mother's errors be what they may. Come nearer, dears. Let me hold your hands; and you must promise you will still love me. I am going to confess to you, my children, the error—yes, I will utter the word—the crime of my youth. I was a married woman when I first knew your father. But he to whom I was married did not care for me; perhaps it was my fault he did not—I will not throw any blame on him. My heart was desolate! Your father saw me unhappy, and he pitied me—he loved me. I forgot my duties, forgot the vow I had breathed at the altar, in the sight of God; I left the husband I had sworn to love, and gave the love which was his due, to another. ‘This is a dreadful, a heinous sin, my children, and this sin did your mother commit! But you have been early taught to read your Bible, and you have there learned that there is more joy in Heaven over one repentant sinner, than over ninety-and-nine just men who need no repentance. Oh, blessed words! How many thousand thousand times have I read, and re-read ye! Ye alone have preserved me from sinking under the load of my guilt. Yes, my children, I have repented; deeply, earnestly, bitterly, unceasingly. I may truly say, my sin is ever before me. Oh! if repentance can find mercy at the throne of Heaven, let it find mercy at your hands, my children! Pardon, pardon your erring mother!’ and worked up beyond her powers of endurance, she threw herself on her knees at their feet.

They rushed to her, they kissed her, they raised her to the sofa, they soothed her, they wept over her, they lavished on her every most touching expression of affection, they assured her of their love, their respect, their veneration.

“Stop! stop! beloved ones. Do not let your tenderness to me blind you to the reality of my sin. Love me! Yes, love me still, but I must not let that love confound in your young

minimise the difference between virtue and vice. I am not yet come to the end. I have to tell you how the errors of the fathers are visited upon the children.

"Even you, my Emily, know that unless parents are solemnly married according to the law of the land, the children do not inherit their name or their property, and alas! alas! you, Edward, cannot inherit this weary world before my former marriage was cancelled. Upon your head are my sins visited. Yes! and upon yours, Charles, and yours, Emily, for you have a mother whom you must not honour, for whom you must blush before the world."

"Oh, mamma, mamma," they cried at once, "we love you, we honour you! Oh! that we could prove how much we love you,—better than ever!"

"Thanks, thanks! my own dear, innocent, good children! And would you really do all you can to sooth my anguish, to lessen the bitterness of my remorse?"

Edward exclaimed, "Oh, mother, don't talk so—any thing—every thing!"

"Then listen, Edward! I have remarked your altered manner. I felt certain that at school you had heard some of the circumstances of your birth, and I resolved that from my lips you should all learn the truth, the whole truth. It was, if possible, more painful to imagine you hearing your mother scornfully spoken of, than to be my own accuser. Oh! my boy! if you knew the agony of self-accusation that racked me, when I saw you thus reserved and melancholy, you would have thrown off your gloom. I know you would! Oh! Edward, in pity to your penitent parent, be once more your gay, ingenuous self. You know how dear you are to every one in this house. You need not wrap yourself up in solitary pride. If my children should not love each other, then am I punished indeed!" And she pressed her hands tight over her eyes as if to shut out the horrid picture.

Edward burst into tears, threw his arms round Charles, and gave him a warm and heartfelt fraternal kiss.

"And you, Charles, who have bright prospects before you as far as worldly prosperity tends to happiness, think whose fault deprives your brother of these advantages, and for my sake, love him, Charles, more dearly than brother ever loved brother."

"That I will indeed, mamma," cried Charles.

"My Emily! If you would honour your mother, prove to the world that she could guide your mind to the strictest virtue,

Let your conduct be such as in some measure to redeem my fame!"

The effect of this scene upon her children was such as to repay Maria for all it had cost her. The brothers were inseparable. Edward became cheerful, and he willingly accepted all the little kindnesses that Charles omitted no opportunity of offering him. In Charles, there was a tone of deference to his elder brother which was very winning, and which went straight to the generous heart of Edward.

One fine winter's morning, Mrs. FitzEustace and Maria were watching the two noble boys, as with keepers, dogs, and guns, they were before the windows preparing for a shooting expedition. They were talking and laughing joyously with each other, and Maria, turning to Mrs. FitzEustace, with tearful but beaming eyes, exclaimed, "I was right, dearest mother, was I not, to tell them every thing? Painful as it was, it has had the desired effect. Oh! how can parents who have nothing to blush for, maintain a causeless and mysterious reserve towards their children! Perhaps, many a prodigal might have been prudent and thoughtful, if he had known how, for his sake, his parents were struggling to keep up a decent appearance in the world. Confidence produces confidence, and children would have the habit of communicating each feeling as it arose, and while it was yet capable of being checked, or guided aright." And as she spoke, she thought if she had felt that tender, fearless confidence in her parents, perhaps her mother might have read the guilty secret of her heart, and have guarded her against its fatal consequences.

The office which Lord Sotheron had so eagerly sought was given to another, and there appeared in the papers a paragraph alluding to the disappointed hopes of a certain noble earl, and the necessity that morality should be upheld by the private, as well as the public character of those in high official situations.

This paragraph met the eye of the two persons to whom it could give the most acute pain. It crushed, it humbled Maria to the very dust. She felt she was, in truth, a blight upon her husband's prospects, and she sunk under the painful conviction.

Lord Sotheron returned to his home, humbled also, but soured and embittered. He was angry with himself for having condescended to solicit, indignant with ministers for having refused, and estranged from Maria, whom he looked upon as the clog which must ever prevent his rising in the career for which he felt himself formed. Hitherto, although neglectful, he had never been unkind; indeed, on any occasion of illness or dis-

tress, he had been attentive and devoted; she had flattered herself that, although often dormant, his affection for her was still all there. But ambition, like the love of gambling, when once it possesses the mind, gradually swallows up all other feelings, and he was now captious, sullen, he spoke sharply to her, seemed bored with what she said, and occasionally implied that she could know nothing of what was going on in the world. She suffered in silence. This was not a case in which open communication would be of any avail. When did a discussion ever call back to life extinct affection? Affection once extinct, what material had she to work upon? There were moments when she thought it hard *he* should be the person, in manner, if not in words, to reproach her for her error. At least that error was mutual, and she remembered the arguments, the entreaties, the vows, the oaths he had employed to lead her to the very step for which he now despised her. But oftener, far oftener, she found excuses for him in that heart where he was so dearly cherished; she reflected how galling it must be to a proud and eager temper to have sued in vain; she looked back with tenderness and gratitude to the many proofs of affection he had given her in former times, and she pitied, rather than resented his present irritation.

Mrs. FitzEustace remarked with sorrow the altered temper of her son, but her health, which had been of late declining, had in some measure communicated its languor to her mind. She was gradually fading away, but so gradually, that it was not till she was very near her end, that her son began to take alarm.

Extreme in every thing, he was angry with her for not having warned him of the state of her health. He reproached her for having allowed her sickness to creep on, without calling their attention to the alarming symptoms of which she was herself aware. She gently smiled, and told him death had no terrors for one for whom life had no charms.

"If I had seen you happy—" she added, "but as it is, I look forward almost with impatience, to the moment of reunion with him from whom my heart has never for one moment been severed."

As Walter and Maria knelt by their mother's death-bed, as she blessed them both with her faint sweet voice, their hearts once more opened to each other, and they mingled tears of sorrow, which to Maria were not wholly devoid of sweetness.

As she gazed on the marble brow, and the closed lids of that placid countenance, she envied the spirit that was at rest, the

heart that was not torn by a thousand conflicting feelings, and she longed to be laid in the quiet grave beside her. Alas! she had not yet exhausted the varied sufferings awaiting one

“ Who, loving virtue, but by passion driven
To worst extremes, must never, never more
Honour herself—”

Yet Maria had been more fortunate than many under the same circumstances. She had not been deserted by him for whom she had sacrificed every thing: on the contrary, he had made every reparation in his power. She had been kindly received by his family, she enjoyed rank and riches, her children were dutiful and affectionate, no adventitious circumstances aggravated her wretchedness.

The miseries described in the preceding narrative are simply those to which every erring woman is liable.

CHAPTER V.

“ But guilt,
And all our sufferings?” said the count.
The Goth replied, “ Repentance taketh sin away,
Death remedies the rest.”

SOTHERY.

EMILY was nearly eighteen, and she was to appear in the world as became the daughter of Lord Sotheron. They went to London. Maria made up her mind never to accompany her daughter, even to the few places where she might be kindly received. She thought there was more dignity in voluntarily retiring, than in appearing occasionally at some houses, and consequently proving that she was not seen elsewhere because she would not be admitted.

Invitations for Lord Sotheron, and Lady Emily FitzEustace flocked to the house, and Maria received the cards from the porter's hand with a tightness of heart, a difficulty of breathing, at which she was herself surprised.—“ Can I,” she thought, “ who have endured such real sorrow, be so moved by a contemptible invitation to a foolish ball?” But she blushed crimson as she felt her daughter's eye glance over the card on which her mother's name was omitted.

However, she rejoiced that Emily knew the truth ; that she had not now to learn it. The evening came, when the lovely Lady Emily FitzEustace was to make her *début* in the great world. Her mother presided at her toilet. She smoothed every curl, she arranged every fold. Her hands trembled, her eye was haggard, her voice was unsteady, but she fought hard not to allow her emotion to be visible. She would not cloud the innocent young creature's anticipated joys.

Lord Sotheron was waiting below, and before they entered the carriage Maria wished to know if he approved of his daughter's dress and appearance. As she held a candle that he might examine some ornaments he had just given her, he was forcibly struck by the contrast between the glowing cheek, the sparkling eye, the fresh *parure* of the blooming young girl, and the neglected dress, the homely morning cap, and above all, the fearful expression of countenance of the mother. A pang of remorse shot through him, and he inquired if she felt ill in a tone of unusual tenderness.

"I am quite well," she answered, hurriedly, and they went down-stairs. She remained suspended till she heard their carriage drive away, when her overstrung nerves gave way, and she flung herself on the sofa in an agony of tears. She felt it impossible to try to sleep while thus constrained to desert the natural duty of a mother. Sick at heart, she sat expecting her daughter's return, and listening to the eternal carriages rolling in endless succession to scenes where she could not be admitted to watch over her child.

At length she heard the growing sound of approaching wheels, and the clatter of the horses' feet stopping at the door. Emily was surprised to find her still up, but was hastening to describe all the brilliant scene she had witnessed, when her attention was arrested by the wo-worn countenance and swollen eyes of her mother.

"Mamma," she said. "I will never go out again. I see it makes you unhappy. These foolish flowers, these fine necklaces—how you must have suffered while you were decking me out in them. And I! giddy thing, only thought of the unknown wonders I was going to see. Oh, mamma! how cruel, how unfeeling of me!"

"My child, my child," interrupted Maria; "it is true I have acutely felt seeing you launched on the dangerous and stormy sea of life without my watchful eye to guard you. I should deceive you if I attempted to disguise my pangs of mortified affection, of mortified pride; but believe me, I should

suffer far, far more, if I thought my fault condemned my innocent child to a life of seclusion. If I thought she was to be cut out from all society because I have forfeited my own place in it. I am not so selfish! Mix with the world, dearest Emily, and trust me, that to see you and your brothers good and happy, can now alone give this aching heart one throb of pleasure;" and she pressed her hand to her left side, where she had of late felt considerable pain and uneasiness; "and now, good night, my love, I do not feel quite well."

Habit did not deaden the keenness of her mortification. Every night when Emily returned home, Maria underwent the same ever new sufferings. To her sensitive feelings, which were morbidly alive to every the most indifferent circumstances, scarcely a day or an hour passed in which something did not occur which wounded them.

If in ordering a dress for Emily, the milliner made use of those expressions so common in the mouth of every *marchande de modes*—"On ne le porte plus."—"C'est la mode passée;" she shrunk into herself, and thought, "Even the milliner is aware I am excluded from society, and thinks I can know nothing that is going forward in the world."

One morning a young friend of Emily's called on her at the moment when Lord Sotheron was leaving London to pass a few days in the country, and she thoughtlessly exclaimed, "Oh! what will you do, Lady Emily? You must go to the Spanish ambassador's ball to-morrow night, and who can you get to chaperon you?"

Maria could scarcely command sufficient composure to remain in the room, and to appear engrossed with the book which she had been reading.

It often happened that in some morning excursion, Emily was joined by one or two of the young men with whom she had become acquainted. On such occasions the duty of introducing them to her mother devolved on Emily, and she performed the necessary little ceremony with grace and modesty, but with a certain air of shyness and distress. Maria felt that in her case the usual order of things was reversed. She felt that Emily's acquaintance would look her over with curiosity; she felt that if any one was a serious admirer, his intentions towards the daughter might be influenced by the disgrace of the mother being thus forced upon his recollection; she felt that Emily was shy, and she fancied she must feel ashamed of her.

In this manner all the mortifications of the first years after
VOL. I.—T

her divorce were renewed with tenfold bitterness. Perhaps the constant state of painful excitement in which she lived, combined with late hours (for she invariably sat up till Emily's return), might have aggravated a disorder that soon after assumed a more serious character. Before the London season was over, she became so ill that Emily could no longer be induced to mix in society, but devoted herself to soothing her mother's hours of sickness. She had a constant difficulty of respiration, a gasping for breath, a palpitation at the heart, for which the physicians recommended quiet of mind and body. When they had left her one day after a long consultation, she smiled, and looking up at Emily, said,

"They cannot minister to a mind diseased. It is here, my child, here!" pressing her hand to her heart. "The canker has long been consuming me, and now it will soon have done its work. I wish your brothers were in London, for my end may perhaps be sudden, and I would not pass away without giving them my blessing." Poor Emily communicated her mother's wish to Lord Sotheron, and Charles and Edward were summoned from college.

Lord Sotheron was constant in his attentions, and spared no pains to soften and alleviate Maria's sufferings. He had once truly loved her; and when he felt assured he was about to lose this devoted being, she rose before his imagination beautiful and brilliant, the cynosure of all hearts and eyes, as when he had first known her, and his conscience told him he had himself blasted all he had so passionately admired.

One day Maria was much exhausted by a more than usually severe attack of palpitation, and they had moved her towards an open window. They were all anxiously attending upon her, and she gazed round upon the group with tenderness and thankfulness.

"I am better now," she said, "so do not look so much frightened, dear children. It is going off for this time. Still there is no use in our deceiving ourselves and each other. I have long felt pain and oppression, which I thought would one day prove fatal. But I bless a merciful Providence, who has granted me time for repentance and for preparation, and now I bless that Providence who will soon release me from my life of penance.

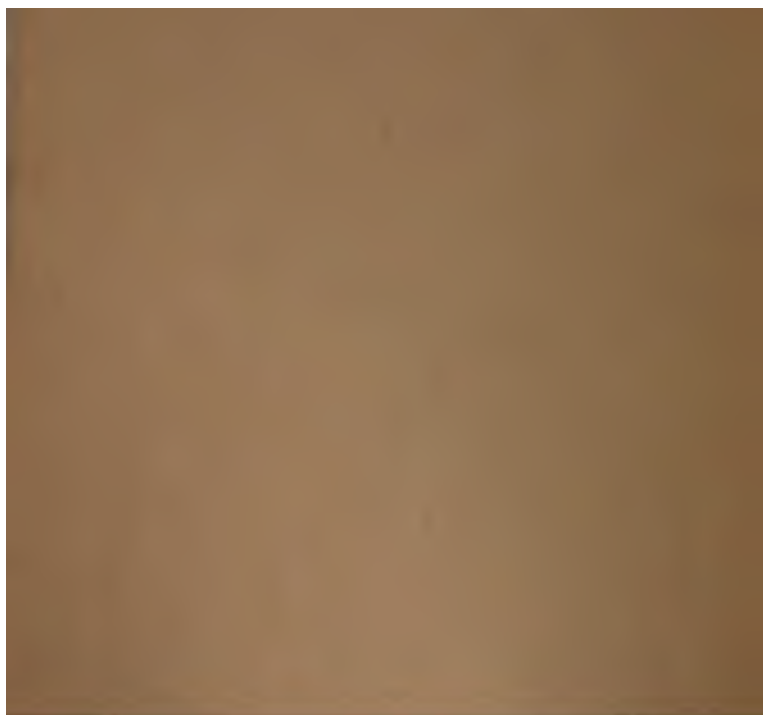
"I trust that the time allowed me has not been allowed me in vain. Each bitter pang that I have endured I have considered as part of my atonement, and I have offered it up to offended Heaven. There is one pain I have been spared! one

"joy I have tasted! you have seen all a mother's heart could wish—continue as you are. Be good, my sweetest children—be good, and trust to Providence for the rest. Wealth, in virtue alone there is true happiness. I am not so! Dearly as I have loved you, and how dearly must you have loved me, as surely know,—Heaven alone, who knows how I have wrestled with my love, can know—that I have never as I have loved you, not for one moment, and what is destined to love me with an affection equal to my own heart—never happiness—happiness—that is only for the pious!"

"Seemed to love you, Maria," was poor Bob's remark, in a half-reproachful tone.

"I did not mean to say that," said Walter. "Thank you for your past affection, thank you for your present tenderness. Oh! it is all here. Walter, the last of many years is all here, in this breaking, and in my heart, but I hope cancelled by our long union. If I am called to lie on the threshold of the grave, Heaven be merciful to me!" and she clasped her hands. "Pray for me, my sweetest, now, and pray for me when I am gone. Your sweetest prayers, will win me mercy! Pray for me! pray for me!" and she sank back exhausted. The state of excitement into which her feelings had been worked, brought on a new attack of palsy, more severe than the former, which was followed by a long illness. From this time she spoke no more, and before the close of the following day, her spirit, we will hope her purified spirit, passed from its earthly tenement.





THE BORROWER WILL BE CHARGED
AN OVERDUE FEE IF THIS BOOK IS NOT
RETURNED TO THE LIBRARY ON OR
BEFORE THE LAST DATE STAMPED
BELOW. NON-RECEIPT OF OVERDUE
NOTICES DOES NOT EXEMPT THE
BORROWER FROM OVERDUE FEES.



